CHCC expands registration for COVID vaccinations on Tinian. PAGE 2
BEA report that Guam's 2019 GDP grew 2%. PAGE 11

75¢

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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CPA posts $5M loss in 2020

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority saw a revenue loss of over $5 million in fiscal year 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic that brought the CNMI's tourism industry to a screeching halt.

In an unaudited CPA report, it said that CPA saw a total revenue loss of $5,047,464.51 in fiscal year 2020. In addition, CPA's total operations and personal expense in fiscal year 2020 was over $12 million.

According to CPA board chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds, the revenue loss is not a surprise because there are no flights and therefore no revenues from emplacements, deplanements, and landing fees.

Currently, CPA is only generating revenue from rental and concession collections but King-Hinds said this is small considering the rent abatement they're giving. CPA is leaning heavily on the CARES Act funding they received in mid-2020.

See CPA on Page 4

TORRES, PALACIOS MEET WITH LEGISLATURE

Terminations, revenue generation talks

Palacios

» American Rescue Plan seen to help situation of affected employees

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios met with the leadership of the Legislature yesterday morning to discuss the termination of 180 furloughed government employees and to talk about revenue-generating bills that are needed right now.

In an interview after the two-hour

See TERMINATIONS on Page 4

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Victoria T. Guerrero, protocol officer to the governor and lieutenant governor, assists three persons who picked up pre-application forms for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program at the Governor's Office mailroom on Capital Hill yesterday morning.

Many start lining up to avail of rental aid

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Many people started lining yesterday at the Governor's Office mailroom on Capital Hill to pick up pre-application forms for the $10.4-million COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program.

When *Saipan Tribune* checked the mailroom at 11am, a total of 321 pre-application forms have already been handed out.

Victoria T. Guerrero, protocol offi-

See MANY on Page 4

AT A GLANCE

As of 7pm, Feb. 17, 2021

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,701	2	7,703
Recovered	7,500	23	7,523
Active	48	2	50
Deaths	130	0	130
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested		122,579	

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	135	0	135
Traced via Travel Screening	109	0	109
Traced via Community Screening	26	0	26
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested		26,131*	
Days since last community transmission		182	

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI
Saipan: 13,981 • Tinian: 481 • Rota: 363

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center – Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Terry and Joselito Jose, who have been married for 47 years, pose at the Garapan Fishing Base Wednesday afternoon.

Husband and group of Japanese men helped save a woman's life

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

For 60-year-old Terry Muna Jose, 71-year-old Joselito Jose is not only her husband for 47 years; he is also her savior. Together with a group of drunk Japanese men, they pooled together the 18 bags of blood needed to save Terry's life 39 years ago.

Terry was pregnant with their fourth child in 1982 when she

See HUSBAND on Page 4

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

INSIDE

BUSINESS
Stayhill Resort has transformed itself into Saipan's very own staycation central.
PAGE 12

NATION
A winter storm that left millions without power in record-breaking cold weather killed at least 20.
PAGE 13

ASIA
The Philippine Supreme Court has dismissed an election protest by the son of the late Ferdinand Marcos.
PAGE 14

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Sergeant First Class Romeo Igisomar, fourth from left, is surrounded by family members and Army soldiers who witnessed his promotion from staff sergeant to sergeant first class at the Laly 4 Beach in Chalan Kanoa last Feb. 17.

Local

US Army recruiter promoted to SFC

After 17 years of active service in the U.S. Army, U.S. Army recruiter Staff Sgt. Romeo Igisomar was promoted to sergeant first class yesterday morning in a ceremony held at the Laly 4 Beach in Chalan Kanoa, where Igisomar had grown up.

Igisomar later said his promotion feels rewarding and gives him a sense of accomplishment for all the hard work he's done through the years.

Igisomar recounts that he was studying at the Northern Marianas College when he was inspired to join the Army after learning about the educational benefits it offered at the time.

Igisomar originally wanted to work in the courtroom, whether as a lawyer or a paralegal. He liked the idea of working in that environment and didn't imagine he would join the U.S. Army. But then, Igisomar said he was able to experience working as a paralegal for several years while in the Army and is thankful to have that opportunity.

After many years of active service, Igisomar returned to the CNMI to become a recruiter, with a mission to share with the community what the Army can offer and to inspire others. "I went out there and did it, and you can do it too," he said.

Igisomar's wife and three sons keep him determined to reach his goals. He said his promotion is something he truly worked hard for.

There are certain requirements and service procedures that must be met in order to be promoted to any rank and it takes a lot of time and effort, he added. ***(Neil Fama)***

CHCC expands registration for COVID vaccinations on Tinian

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. has expanded the registration for Tinian's Phase 1A and Phase 1B COVID-19 vaccinations.

According to CHCC's Facebook post yesterday, Tinian registrants will get vaccinated this Saturday, Feb. 20, from 9am to 3pm at the Tinian Health Center. The last person to be vaccinated will be at 2:30pm.

The Phase 1A and Phase 1B criteria includes all persons 55 years or older, CNMI infrastructure workers in the public and private sectors (food and agriculture, commercial facilities, media and telecommunications, transportation systems, energy and utilities, financial services, waste and water systems, public works and support systems, education staff [Public School System, Northern Marianas College, private schools, and daycares]), COVID-19 contractors employed by the CNMI Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, and CNMI state/local government employees.

CHCC said that vaccination will depend upon verification of employment status by THC and daily capacity.

Speaking at a press briefing last Friday, CHCC chief executive officer Esther Muña said that in the best-case scenario, all individuals who want to be vaccinated will have received their shots by May. The worst-case scenario is that the vaccination will be completed in August.

COVID-19 vaccines are a two-shot regimen. As of Thursday, a total of 8,396 dose 1, and 5,585 dose 2 have been administered to individuals on Saipan, 273 dose 1 and 128 dose 2 for individuals on Tinian, and 363 dose 1 on Rota. This brings the CNMI total to 14,825 doses administered.

Muña said the CNMI has received a total of 18,000 COVID-19 vaccination doses, and there are currently 6,000 doses left. She added that CHCC communicates regularly with the federal government to ensure that the allocation of vaccines for the CNMI is adequate.

"We anticipate to receive more doses by the end of this month," said Muña.

The current goal is to vaccinate at least 60% to 70% of the adult population, more specifically the *man'amko*, or those 55 years or older within the CNMI.

With the new guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that those who are fully vaccinated will be able to skip quarantine if they are exposed to someone who is infected, Muña said that CHCC, the task force, and the administration will continue to do what's right and appropriate for the CNMI.

"We've seen what happens

See CHCC on Page 4

Sablan prefiles bill to restore EITC for working families

Sablan

Rep. Christina Marie E. Sablan (D-Saipan) has prefiled a bill that would repeal a law in order to provide relief for working families by making them eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Cosponsored by 10 other House of Representatives lawmakers, H.B. 22-10 would restore the EITC for low-and moderate-income working families in the CNMI.

The bill is among the many legislations that will be introduced during the first regular session of the 22nd House of Representatives tomorrow, Friday, at 2:30pm.

Sablan stated in the bill that EITC is a refundable tax credit in the U.S. Internal Revenue Service Code that helps qualified low- to moderate-income working families and taxpayers get a tax break by allowing them to use the credit to reduce the taxes they owe, and in some cases, increase their tax refunds.

The legislation will repeal Title 4 Section 1709 of the Commonwealth Code, which currently provides that a taxpayer who is owed a tax refund due to "any excessive credit" must pay an additional tax to the Commonwealth that is equal to 100% of the refund.

She said since the enactment of Public Law 11-25 in 1998, low-and middle-income earners of the Commonwealth have been burdened by this 100% tax on refunds for which they would have otherwise qualified.

She said Title 4, Section 1709 of the Commonwealth Code could further be misconstrued to prohibit the CNMI from issuing other refundable tax credits in the IRS Code not limited to the EITC.

Sablan said the EITC is a proven and effective tool to fight poverty and lift household incomes because it encourages labor force participation among low- and middle-income individuals and families with children, and especially women with children, and puts money back into the hands of working taxpayers who need it most.

In addition to incentivizing employment and boosting earnings of qualified workers, the EITC improves health and educational outcomes for children in low-income families, and helps military families and veterans make ends meet, she said.

The lawmaker said restoring the EITC and reducing the tax burden on low- and moderate-income working families and taxpayers will also stimulate the economy, since those who qualify for tax refunds are likely to spend that money immediately.

"We must do our part locally…to help the Commonwealth's struggling families get back on their feet. Restoring the EITC is a good start," she said. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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STK: 19HS999
KBB: $18,793
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10,640 MILES
STK:18HS946
KBB: $20,609
2019 MITSUBISHI OUTLANDER SE
SALE PRICE $18,995
11,486 MILES
STK:19HS967
KBB: $19,633
2015 MAZDA MAZDA5 VAN
SALE PRICE $9,995
61,806 MILES • STK: 20M138A • KBB:$9,900
2018 MAZDA MAZDA3 SPORT
SALE PRICE $14,995
8,730 MILES • STK:8HS878 • KBB: $19,449
2018 MAZDA MAZDA6 SPORT
SALE PRICE $16,995
7,365 MILES • STK:18HS965C • KBB: $22,095
2014 MAZDA CX-9
SALE PRICE $12,995
34,682 MILES • STK:4P298 • KBB: $13,199
2018 MAZDA MAZDA3 SPORT
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7,910 MILES • STK:8HS875 • KBB: $19,496
2015 TOYOTA HIGHLANDER LE
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62,811 MILES • STK:5HS735A • KBB: $19,031
2017 MAZDA MAZDA3 SPORT
SALE PRICE $13,995
38,494 MILES • STK:7R235 • KBB: $16,146
2016 HYUNDAI VELOSTER
SALE PRICE $14,995
39,217MILES • STK: 20H068-A • KBB: $15,830
2018 HONDA CIVIC EXT
SALE PRICE $21,995
9,993 MILES • STK:18HS935 • KBB: $22,425
2017 MAZDA MAZDA3 SPORT
SALE PRICE $13,995
34,789 MILES • STK:7R218 • KBB: $15,129
2016 HYUNDAI TUCSON GL
SALE PRICE $15,995
58,260 MILES • STK: 20D063A • KBB: $16,231
2013 TOYOTA 4RUNNER
SOLD
SALE PRICE $22,995
70,356 MILES • STK:3P291 • KBB: $23,910
2016 TOYOTA PRIUS C
SALE PRICE $14,995
48,814 MILES • STK:20D134A • KBB: $16,585
2017 MAZDA CX-3 GT AWD
SALE PRICE $16,995
18,475 MILES • STK: 7P295 • KBB: $18,470
2014 FORD F-150 STX
SOLD
SALE PRICE $21,995
52,401 MILES • STK:20M122A • KBB: $23,479
2017 MAZDA MAZDA6 GT
SALE PRICE $15,995
44,751 MILES • STK:17P305 • KBB: $17,242
2019 MITSUBISHI ECLIPSE CROSS
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7,135 MILES • STK: 19HS983 • KBB: $19,350
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PUA Round 2 comes with new issues

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Department of Labor has begun accepting Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation. As this is the second round of this assistance, DOL says the process should be smoother but now it appears there are some new complications.

In a PUA group on Facebook, one individual said that as they were applying on the PUA portal, reduced hours was not any of the options.

Another individual said they couldn't file for backdated claims, or claims from Dec. 27, 2020. DOL later informed them that backdated filings need to be filed through physical application.

Many were also locked out of their PUA portals as a result of inactivity and were told to apply online.

Others stated that upon getting hold of a PUA representative, they would be told that because they're on reduced hours, they would not be eligible but could still apply.

To date, DOL has yet to clarify whether CNMI-Only Transitional Workers with expired visas qualify for PUA and whether individuals holding Employment Authorization Documents under the C09 category will qualify this time around.

Saipan Tribune tried to reach out to DOL Secretary Vicky Benavente regarding clarifications and clearer guidelines, but Benavente has failed to respond as of press time.

DOL began accepting applications for PUA and FPUC starting Feb. 16, 2021, and will continue to do so through March 13, 2021.

The PUA program provides temporary benefits to individuals whose employment or self-employment has been lost or interrupted as a direct result of COVID-19. The PUA program, through the Continued Assistance Act, provides eligible applicants in the CNMI with 11 weeks of unemployment benefits starting on Dec. 27, 2020, to March 13, 2021.

Under the CAA, for weeks of unemployment beginning after Dec. 26, 2020 and ending on or before March 14, 2021, an individual collecting PUA may collect a $300 FPUC payment per week.

Due to the extensive nature of the eligibility conditions and requirements for PUA, consult the "PUA/FPUC Benefits Rights Information Handbook" found on the CNMI Department of Labor's website at: http://www.marianaslabor.net, under "Forms and Publications" for details.

Individuals may apply for PUA if they have had a week(s) of full or partial unemployment on or after Dec. 27, 2020, through March 13, 2021, as a result of COVID-19. Individuals may file applications for PUA starting today, Feb. 16, 2021, and ending March 13, 2021.

Tropical depression won't affect CNMI

Tropical Depression 01 forming near Palau is expected to become a tropical storm by today, but is not expected affect the Marianas.

According to an advisory from the National Weather Service in Guam, Tropical Depression 01 is moving west at 14 mph. It is expected to make a slight turn toward the west northwest with a decrease in forward speed over the next 24 hours.

The system continues to move away from the Marianas and is expected to continue on this path for the rest of the week.

Tropical Depression 01 is expected to become a tropical storm as it makes it was to the Philippines today. ***(Kimberly Bautista)***

CPA

From Page 1

"What's keeping us afloat are funds from the CARES Act and we are doing everything we can to stretch out those funds to ensure that we don't furlough employees, at least through this fiscal year. What happens next fiscal year all depends on when travel returns to some semblance of normalcy," she said.

CPA received about $22.8 million from the CARES Act and, according to King-Hinds, that aid provided relief that covered the cost for personnel, operations, and debt obligations.

The second COVID-19 relief package that was recently passed would also ensure additional aid for CPA.

King-Hinds said in a previous interview that CPA expects to receive additional relief to aid in the continued operation of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport.

CPA does not know yet when or how much they will receive this time but King-Hinds said the amount will be lesser than what they received from the CARES Act but it will still be necessary relief for the agency.

To date, CPA has not received the aid yet.

In fiscal year 2019, CPA saw a revenue gain of $1.4 million.

TERMINATIONS

From Page 1

meeting at the Office of the Governor conference room, Palacios said they're looking at the many challenges facing the CNMI in terms of funding and revenue.

Palacios said the House and the Senate leaderships are recommending some things that they're going to do to generate funds for the government.

They also discussed the fate of the 180 furloughed government employees who are facing outright termination from their jobs.

"So we were just sitting down and discussed what the options are and what kind of legislations will be needed for revenue-generation," Palacios said.

He said both the House and the Senate are going to go over the many items that were put on the table.

"We'll be meeting with them again," he said.

When asked if there is a possibility of recalling these 180 furloughed employees, Palacios said he does not want to preempt Torres and the leaders of the Legislature. "But we're very optimistic. Very, very optimistic that we can do that," he said, adding that one option is the American Rescue Plan and or the CARES Act legislation that is making its way through the U.S. Congress.

"That's a very hopeful sight," the lieutenant governor said.

The American Rescue Plan, which is now going through the committee approval process in the U.S. House of Representatives, is part of the Biden administration's plan to help states and territories survive the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Part of that plan is to provide the Northern Marianas $515 million to make up for lost government revenue.

Palacios said that different departments and the Office of Personnel Management are going through a process to determine whether the positions of those furloughed employees are still relevant or not.

"We're not looking at individuals, we're looking at positions," he added. He said the departments and OPM have been working in the past two days on what needs to be done on termination notices, but that he is not sure if such notices have been already handed to the employees.

Palacios said Finance Secretary David DLG Atalig calculated that about $5.6 million in revenue is needed this fiscal year 2021 in order to retain these 180 employees.

"So we're kind of sitting down and trying to figure out how to source it," Palacios said.

Citing the Office of Grants Management's plan to hire 12 furloughed employees using the $10.4 million that the CNMI had already received through the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, Palacios said it is possible when there are other opportunities and funding sources.

"At the end of the day, we needed to give these folks proper notice because it's required by law if we don't have the resources," he said.

Palacios said they also asked legislative leaders to work on revenue-generating measures.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

HUSBAND

From Page 1

slipped on the floor in their bathroom, almost had a miscarriage several months later, and nearly lost her life after losing so much blood.

At first, Terry seemed okay after the accident. In fact, the doctor told her that she and the baby were fine. But when she reached five months with her pregnancy, the baby was found in distress and had to be taken out at once. Terry said she was taken to the Commonwealth Health Center—at the time called the Dr. Torres Hospital—after she had internal bleeding and needed 18 bags of blood to survive.

Fortunately, it was found out that Joselito has the same blood type—A positive—as Terry. Joselito said a bag of 500 CC blood was taken from him, but the doctor told him that it wasn't not enough. After an hour or two, another bag of 500 CC was taken from Joselito. With Terry bleeding profusely, more blood, however, was needed.

"After taking my blood, I get up right away and the doctor stopped me and said, 'No, no, no, you cannot [get up]. You need to rest,'" said Joselito.

He ignored this, insisting that he needed to go out and look for A positive blood. Joselito went to see his Japanese mechanic friend, who at the time was with about 10 Japanese men who were either tourists or hotel workers. He said the Japanese men, who were all drunk, were supposed to go to Managaha Island that day. Instead, they agreed to follow Joselito and his mechanic friend to the hospital to have their blood checked and see if they could donate.

"I talked to the doctor if they can check their blood and what type of blood they have. And I told the doctor that all of them are drunk, but the doctor said it's okay as long as the blood type is the same," Joselito recounted. Good news: the blood type of some of those Japanese men matched Terry's blood type.

It was not all hunky-dory yet. Joselito said his wife's condition already appeared helpless so the doctor told him to bring a priest to bless her, which he did.

All in all, Terry was in the hospital for a month.

Terry said that before she left the hospital, the doctor told her that he cannot promise her if she could have another child, that she would be lucky if she will still be able to conceive.

"But [after] four years I got pregnant [again] with a miracle baby," said Terry.

In fact, the couple had five children in all: One lives at their compound in Dandan, two are in Guam, and two are in the U.S. mainland. They have 20 grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

Terry was only 16 years old when she met Joselito, who was then 26 years old and staying at the Sablan Construction barracks in San Antonio.

Terry had just come from a family vacation in Guam and had stayed at her sister's place, which was near Joselito's barracks.

Joselito, who hails from Manila, Philippines, first arrived on Saipan on Feb. 10, 1974, to work as a welder at the airport. Two years later, he met Terry.

"I was so sexy at the time," said Terry with a hearty laugh.

With her parents' consent, they married on June 14, 1976, at a community church. In 1977, they had their first baby. In 1984, Joselito started work as a body and fender welder at Microl Toyota. He only retired from Microl Toyota after Super Typhoon Soudelor struck in 2015.

Terry said Joselito is her life. "I would never change him and my children," she said.

Saipan Tribune interviewed the couple at the Garapan Fishing Base, where Terry accompanied Joselito, who was fishing.

MANY

From Page 1

cer to Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Gov. Arnold I, Palacios, has been assisting those getting and dropping pre-application forms.

Guerrero said there was a long line shortly after they opened at 7:30am yesterday; they closed yesterday at 4:30pm.

OGM started accepting and receiving the pre-applications Tuesday at the Governor's Office mailroom. OGM also started sending the pre-application forms to Tinian and Rota on Tuesday. The forms can be picked up and dropped at their respective mayor's office.

The OGM said they are still working with the U.S. Department of Treasury and U.S. Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) for more guidance to ascertain whether foreign workers and those with other immigration status are eligible for rental aid.

One foreign worker who requested that she be identified only as Marites, asked her husband, who is also a foreign worker, to get the pre-application form after seeing the announcement on Facebook.

Maritess said they were driving around Capital Hill because they did not know the exact location of the mailroom.

She and her husband felt bad when *Saipan Tribune* told them that as of now, only U.S. citizens and green card holders are eligible, per OGM's announcement.

Marites and her husband have a 15-year-old child, who is a U.S. citizen.

Marites worked for many years at a Saipan hotel but was furloughed in March because of the pandemic. She was subsequently terminated last August. Her husband, a tractor driver, lost his job last April. They said they only survive because of food stamps and doing all kinds of part-time jobs.

The couple said their main problem is paying their $400 monthly rent. They said their landlord has given them only tomorrow, Friday, to pay the rent or else they will be evicted.

"It's the other way around now. Our family in the Philippines is now sending money to us here," said the husband, who also asked not to be identified.

The CNMI was awarded $10,400,669 for rental assistance and utility relief through the Emergency Rental Assistance Program under the recently enacted Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act.

OGM administrator Epiphanio Cabrera Jr. said the program aims to reduce evictions and to keep CNMI citizens in stable homes, especially during the COVID-19 emergency.

Eligible households may receive up to 12 months of rental assistance plus an additional three months, depending on the household's circumstances.

Payments to existing household-related arrears as far back as March 13, 2020, will be prioritized before consideration of any future rent payments.

CHCC

From Page 2

with loosened protocols: more cases and more infections in the community, which we don't have," she added.

Muña said the main focus is that they are more committed to making sure that the *man'amko* and the most vulnerable population are protected.

Walk-ins for vaccination are only available for the *man'amko*; all other individuals must register either online or over the phone.

Muña reiterated that the plan for the local vaccination campaign was submitted to and approved by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the CDC.

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Guam sailor is named Officer Instructor of the Year

By KELSEY HOCKENBERGER
COMMANDER, SUBMARINE SQUADRON 15

SANTA RITA, Guam—Lt. Alfonso Sciacchitano, assigned to Naval Submarine Training Center Pacific, Detachment Guam, was named the 2020 Naval Education and Training Command Officer Instructor of the Year in a ceremony held at Konetzni Hall last Feb 11.

Sciacchitano, a native of Marietta, Georgia, was also announced as the 2020 NSTCP Officer Instructor of the Year and the 2020 Submarine Learning Center Officer Instructor of the Year.

"I'm extremely honored to be recognized as the officer instructor of the year," said Sciacchitano. "My selection is a direct reflection of the caliber of students I have taught. I have an incredibly dedicated and supportive staff, both military and civilian, that have helped shape me into the leader and instructor that I am today."

Sciacchitano serves as NSTCP, Det. Guam's Prospective Nuclear Engineer Officer Instructor and engineering and weapons department head. He is responsible for more than five multi-platform operational courses and serves as the command's force protection officer and high-risk training safety officer.

"Lt. Sciacchitano has demonstrated unsurpassed leadership and expertise," said Cmdr. Christian Rivera, officer in charge at NSTCP, Det. Guam. "His personal involvement in all training, experienced mentorship, and continuous drive for improvement have been a strong influence on the command and have been paramount to the detachment's operational successes."

A qualified Master Training Specialist, he exceled at the only forward-deployed Submarine Force Learning Site responsible for fleet-level training in preparation for Western Pacific and Central Command deployments.

"His tenure is marked by enormous contributions to our nation," said Rivera. "I couldn't be [prouder] of his selection."

U.S. NAVY/MACS2 KELSEY J. HOCKENBERGER

Lt. Alfonso Sciacchitano, a native of Marietta, Georgia, assigned to Naval Submarine Training Center Pacific, Detachment Guam, poses for a portrait in the Submarine Multi-Mission Team Trainer at Konetzni Hall.

Sciacchitano credits his success to the mentorship he has gained from Rivera and multiple submarine commanding officers in Guam.

"This has been a very fulfilling tour," said Sciacchitano. "The leadership we have in Guam has played an integral part in our ability to learn, train, and succeed as Sailors and instructors."

The NETC IOY programs recognize sailors throughout the NETC domain who exhibit attributes, such as sustained superior performance, leadership, mentorship, knowledge and teaching of military history and heritage, self-improvement, command and community involvement, and exemplary military bearing.

NSTCP, Det. Guam, provides training for multiple Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarines assigned to Commander, Submarine Squadron 15 and submarines deployed throughout the region.

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DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB21-BECQ/DEQ-047

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 18, 2021 TIME: 09:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF ONE (1) CLASS "F" PICK-UP TRUCK FOR THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND COASTAL QUALITY, DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFTEY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ ELI D. CABRERA
ADMINISTRATOR OFBECQ

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB21-BECQ/DEQ-050

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 18, 2021 TIME: 09:30 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF TWO (2) CLASS "I" VEHICLES FOR THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND COASTAL QUALITY, DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY"

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/S/ ELI D. CABRERA
ADMINISTRATOR OFBECQ

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
MAIN OFFICE: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, 2ND FLOOR ARRIVAL BLDG.
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950
PHONE: (1-670) 237-6500/1 • FAX: (1-670) 234-5962
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NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) Board of Directors hereby gives notice that a special meeting is being called on Friday, February 19, 2021, at 3:00 p.m. in the Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) Classroom at the Airport Fire Station located at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport on the island of Saipan. The following items are on the agenda for the above-referenced meeting:

AGENDA

I. **PRELIMINARY MATTERS**
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of Minutes (January 26, 2021)

II. **PUBLIC COMMENT(S)**

III. **SPECIAL MEETING ITEM:**
1. COVID-19 Vaccinations

IV. **EXECUTIVE SESSION (if needed)**

V. **MISCELLANEOUS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

VI. **ADJOURNMENT**

Tune in online as we stream live on the Commonwealth Ports Authority's Facebook page. Written testimony on the agenda items must be sent via email before the meeting to cpa.admin@pticom.com. Attendees (in person) must wear a mask and practice social distancing.

KIMBERLYN KING-HINDS
Chairwoman, Board of Directors

February 16, 2021

DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB21-OGM/MOR-048

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 18, 2021 • TIME: 10:30 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF ONE (1) FOUR-IN-ONE MOBILE CRUSHER FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF ROTA UNDER THE OFFICE OF GRANTS MANAGEMENT & STATE CLEARINGHOUSE"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFETY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB CAN BE MADE TO MR. EPIPHANIO CABRERA, ADMINISTRATOR OF OGM, VIA EMAIL TO epi.cabrera@gov.mp NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS **MARCH 10, 2021**. ALL QUESTIONS SUBMITTED AFTER THE GIVEN DEADLINE WILL **NOT** BE ENTERTAINED. QUESTIONS/AMSWERS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL BIDDERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR.
ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF GRANTS

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS.

DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT
INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB21-OGM/RDCCA-046

SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 18, 2021 • TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF ONE (1) NEW UTILITY SIDE-BY-SIDE VEHICLE FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY & CULTURAL AFFAIRS (ROTA BRANCH) UNDER THE OFFICE OF GRANTS MANAGEMENT & STATE CLEARINGHOUSE"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

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/S EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR.
ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF GRANTS

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS.

Man pleads guilty to 2 counts of fraud

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Michael Rosal Benavente has pleaded guilty to two counts of wire fraud related to a scheme to sell land that was not his own and will be sentenced on June 18, 2021.

According to his guilty plea, Benavente is facing a sentence of up to 20 years for each count of fraud and a fine of up to $250,000.

U.S. District Court for the NMI chief judge Ramona Manglona accepted Benavente's guilty plea and if imprisonment is imposed, Manglona said Benavente will be placed under supervised release immediately after serving the imposed sentence.

The U.S. government will also forfeit any money or property from the offense upon Benavente's conviction.

Benavente was charged with two counts of wire fraud for selling real estate properties that were not his own, and initially pleaded not guilty. He was released on an unsecured bond with conditions.

According to Benavente's indictment, between Dec. 22, 2018 and June 7, 2019, Benavente allegedly devised a scheme to defraud individuals to obtain money by means of materially false and fraudulent pretenses and representations.

Benavente allegedly provided false and fraudulent documents such as title reports and warranty deeds to individuals for the purpose of inducing financial investments in purported real estate transactions.

One of the examples in the indictment states that the defendant provided an individual with a preliminary title report that showed he had title to a lot, which was false and, in fact, the document was a forgery.

The indictment also referenced another incident on or about May 27, 2019, when Benavente provided another person with a preliminary title report that showed he had title to a lot but the document was also an alleged forgery.

UCEDD consumer committee holds 1st meeting

The Consumer Advisory Committee of the CNMI University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at the Northern Marianas College successfully conducted its first meeting of the year on Jan. 29, 2021, via Zoom.

Fitial

CAC chair Emeterio Fitial presided over the meeting and presented the organization's bylaws, his activities in the past months, and gave an overview of the goals of both the CAC and UCEDD.

One of the CAC goals include a resource center equipped with a computer, printer, and access to the Internet for members to be able to do research and conduct CAC-related activities.

Castro

UCEDD director Jennifer-Eilleen E. Castro reported on program updates, including UCEDD's marketing campaign, plans for a new and accessible office space, and the upcoming Pacific Rim virtual conference on disability and diversity.

Ninety percent of members present indicated they were satisfied with the meeting conducted.

In addition, Fitial appointed Vera Jane C. Tudela as the new vice chairperson for the CAC

Tudela

on Feb. 10, 2021. Tudela has a lifetime of experiences and relationships with individuals with developmental disabilities and hopes to be a voice for other self-advocates and family members in the community who are not yet ready to take that leap to full inclusion and change in culture.

The CAC members continue to recruit individuals who are interested in serving as a member to work closely with the UCEDD in promoting their four core functions: interdisciplinary preservice training and continuing education, community services including training and technical assistance, research, and dissemination of information.

Among their responsibilities, CAC members attend meetings, offer advice and guidance to UCEDD, and act as a resource about UCEDD in the community.

The purpose of the CAC is to review, advise, and make recommendations that will assist UCEDD to maintain and develop initiatives that reflect the UCEDD mission, which is to promote, support, and enhance the independence, productivity, integration, and inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families in the community.

For more information about UCEDD, contact cnmi.ucedd@marianas.edu. For more information about the CAC, contact cnmi.ucedd.cac@gmail.com. ***(PR)***

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Accountant – DW2021-01
Saipan, CNMI

Accountant, D & W SAIPAN, INC., Saipan, CNMI

Overall in-charge on the accounting and administrative operation of the company. Report to the management regarding the finances of the company. Prepare and analyze accounting records, financial statements, or other financial report to assess accuracy, completeness and in conformity to reporting and procedural US GAAP standards. Analyze business operations, trends, cost, revenue, financial commitments, and obligation to project future revenues and expenses. Compute the taxes owed and prepare tax returns such as CNMI business gross revenue tax, CNMI Quarterly Withholding, Employer's Quarterly Federal Tax Return (941-SS) and Corporate Income Tax Return (1120-CM), ensuring compliance with payment, reporting or other requirements.

Minimum Requirements: Bachelor's degree in Business, Accounting, Finance, or related field, foreign educational equivalent accepted, plus 12 months experience in general accounting functions. Able to supervise accounting and administrative staff.

Salary: $ 14.85/hour

Workplace: CHALAN PALE ARNOLD MIDDLE ROAD, HIGHWAY EXPRESS BUILDING Saipan, CNMI

To apply: Please send your resume to D & W Saipan, Inc., PO BOX 500440, Saipan, MP 96950 or e-mail to dwsaipan@pticom.com Job Number – **DW2021-01**

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Chunyanyin Rivera Petitioner, vs. Victor Norita Rivera Respondent,

FCD-DI-CIVIL ACTION NO. 21-0028 FCD

SUMMONS OR PUBLICATION

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED RESPONDENT:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on file with the Court, within thirty (30) days after service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Petitioner whose address is P.O. Box 506492 Saipan, MP 96950 as soon as practical after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or Mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file and answer in accordance with this Summons, Judgement by Default may be taken against you for relief in the Complaint.

Dated this 20th day of January, 2021.

/s/ Clerk of Court

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

REQUEST FOR ARCHITECTURAL AND ENGINEERING SERVICES
CUC-RAES-21-010

A&E Design Services for the Agingan Wastewater Treatment Upgrade (S19-068)

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified Architectural and Engineering (A&E) firms for the Design Services of the Agingan Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade in Agingan, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA.

Prospective Proposers for this project must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The RAES package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $100.00 for one package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the Proposal and One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies of the Cost Proposal in a separate envelope must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"CUC-RAES-21-010, A&E Design Services for Agingan Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade"**, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on March 11, 2021. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.**

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposers due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Consultant's preparation of a proposal under the contract. The RAES does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the statement of qualifications under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Consultants are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RAES and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 22, 2021** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email – manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Mr. Larry Manacop, CUC Water/Wastewater, Acting Chief Engineer – via email larry.manacop@cucgov.org; Westen Knudsen, Water/Wastewater Engineer – via email westen.knudsen@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Administrative Technician Senior – via email christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and waive any imperfection in the proposal in the best interest of the government. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
Community Development Block Grant - Disaster Recovery
(CDBG-DR) Program

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

NMHC JVA No.	Positions:	Salary:	Opening Date	Closing Date
2021-013	CDBG-DR Housing Supervisor (1-Position)	UNGRADED $40,000.00 to $45,000.00 per annum	February 15, 2021	March 02, 2021, 4:00 PM
2021-014	CDBG-DR Housing Specialist (2-Positions)	UNGRADED $25,000.00 to $30,000.00 per annum	February 15, 2021	March 02, 2021, 4:00 PM
2021-015	CDBG-DR Accountant (1-Position)	UNGRADED $25,000.00 to $30,000.00 per annum	February 15, 2021	March 02, 2021, 4:00 PM
2021-016	CDBG-DR Project Manager (1-Position)	UNGRADED $50,000.00 to $60,000.00 per annum	February 16, 2021	March 03, 2021, 4:00 PM
2021-017	CDBG-DR Project Supervisor (1-Position)	UNGRADED $35,000.00 to $45,000.00 per annum	February 18, 2021	March 05, 2021, 4:00 PM
2021-018	CDBG-DR Loan Supervisor (1-Position)	UNGRADED $35,000.00 to $45,000.00 per annum	February 18, 2021	March 05, 2021, 4:00 PM

Employment application form, detailed job description, qualification requirements and other information can be accessed at www.nmhcgov.net and www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com.

Applicants may submit their applications through the following options: Submission at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan; Drop Box located in front of the NMHC Central Office building; or email application and documents to officemanager@nmhcgov.net.

All applicants must complete and submit the NMHC Employment Application Form together with required documents that are listed in the Employment Application Package. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. NMHC and all its properties are drug-free zones; therefore, selected applicant will be subject to pre- employment drug screening.

It is the policy of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) that the merit system will be applied and administered according to the principle of equal opportunity for all citizens and nationals as defined by its personnel regulations and the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Constitution regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, disability or place of origin.

For inquiries, please contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-6866/9447 or by email to officemanager@nmhcgov.net. NMHC is a fair housing agency and an equal opportunity provider, lender and employer.

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Don't travel, CDC warns, but if you must...

Infectious disease expert Dr. Peter Bornstein understands well the midwinter yearning for palm trees and ocean breezes. Most years, the Twin Cities physician has a family trip booked to a tropical getaway. He's often advised new doctors who've moved to Minnesota from elsewhere to do the same.

This year, Bornstein is checking the powerful urge to buy plane tickets even though he's been vaccinated against COVID-19 as a front-line medical provider. He's alarmed about new viral variants and travel's role in spreading them.

"The concern is that the variants may make 2021 look like 2020," Bornstein said, referring to the past year dominated by disease control measures. "I'd like 2021 to look like 2019."

While air travel and hotel bookings lag far below pre-COVID levels, many of us have nevertheless seen vacation photos posted on social media by friends or family. As COVID-19 metrics in Minnesota and elsewhere trend in the right direction, it's understandable, especially with the recent subzero blast of cold, to want an escape.

Bornstein's advice is to resist temptation. That's also what the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends. Repeated throughout its "Travel during COVID-19" resource guide is some version of this: "Avoid travel."

Note that the agency doesn't distinguish between international and domestic travel. Nor does it make exceptions for those who have been vaccinated or have had COVID. Vaccines, as well as natural immunity after having COVID, may be less effective against new viral variants.

At the same time, the CDC acknowledges that there will be those who venture forth anyway. Its online travel resource covers the recent federal mask requirement on public transportation traveling into or within the United States.

It also spells out another requirement: "All air passengers coming to the United States, including U.S. citizens, are required to have a negative COVID-19 test result or documentation of recovery from COVID-19 before they board a flight to the United States."

From Bornstein's perspective, some critical CDC recommendations haven't received the spotlight they deserve. For example, the agency recommends getting tested for COVID one to three days before departure. The reason: to avoid getting sick with COVID on your trip and spreading the virus to others.

Other key, not-well-understood recommendations involve what to do when you get home. Travelers should get tested again three to five days after their return, and the CDC also recommends quarantining following a trip.

Even if a returning traveler tests negative, the CDC recommends a "full 7 days" quarantine after travel. (You might test negative soon after exposure to the virus). And, "If you don't get tested, stay home and self-quarantine for 10 days after travel."

An extra step is recommended if there are people in the household who did not go on the same trip. If that's the case, the traveler should "wear a mask and ask everyone in the

See CDC on Next Page

Why being introspective is a double-edged sword

By ETHAN KROSS
Los Angeles Times

Ethan Kross is a professor of psychology and management at the University of Michigan and author of the book Chatter: The Voice in Our Head, Why It Matters, and How to Harness It.

"Live in the moment" is a cultural mantra of our time. Instead of reflecting on the past or imagining the future we are exhorted to connect with the present.

And yet this well-intentioned message runs counter to our biology. Humans weren't made to hold fast to the present all the time. That's just not what our brains evolved to do.

Research shows that we spend one-third to one-half of our waking life not living in the present. As naturally as we breathe, we decouple from the here and now, with our brains transporting us to past events, imagined scenarios and other internal musings.

Our ability to do this is a remarkable tool. Drifting off into our thoughts allows for introspection—the space to imagine, remember, reflect, and then use these reveries to solve problems, innovate, and create. Many scientists see this as one of the central evolutionary advances that distinguish human beings from other species.

But introspection can sometimes lead to more harm than good, contributing to anxiety and depression, which has skyrocketed during the COVID-19 pandemic. When we focus inward to work through our problems we may find that doing so causes us to feel worse. This internal chatter—negative thought loops—can make our capacity for introspection feel more like a curse than a blessing. We think about that screw-up at work, or a misunderstanding with a loved one, or the COVID-19 case rate in our community—and we end up flooded by how bad we feel.

Then we think about it again.

And again.

The fact that introspection is both a helpful tool and destructive force is a great paradox of the human mind. Fortunately, science has begun to explain why this looping happens, and how to rein it in.

One thing we've learned is that negative thought cycles occur when we zoom in too close on our problems. This inflames our emotions to the exclusion of alternative ways of thinking about the issue that might cool us down. In other words, we lose perspective.

One natural solution to this problem is to zoom out—to "step back" from your problems so you can think about them more objectively. Although that prescription may seem straightforward, as anyone who has struggled with this problem knows, it's easier said than done.

But science-based tools exist to help—in the words we use to think about ourselves, the conversations we have with our loved ones and the spaces we navigate. Consider just a few examples.

When the Hollywood star Jennifer Lawrence became uncomfortable during an interview in 2015, she used a simple but effective strategy to regain perspective. She said to herself, "OK, get ahold of yourself, Jennifer. This is not therapy." By addressing herself by name she talked to herself like she was speaking to someone else.

Most people find it easier to advise other people than themselves. When a problem isn't happening to you, it's easier to remain objective.

Language provides us with a tool to think about ourselves like we were someone else. Scientists call it distanced self-talk, which involves using your name and "you" to refer to yourself. And far from being a simple quirk of speech or a sign of narcissistic self-absorption, research shows that distanced self-talk helps people regulate negative emotions, reason wisely and perform better under stress.

Another way to gain perspective is to talk to others, but not any conversation will do. Many people think that venting helps. While that does make us feel closer and more connected to the people we vent to, it doesn't help us solve our problems and in some cases makes them worse by revving up the internal chatter we want to go away.

The key to avoiding co-rumination, as it is often called, is to focus on talking to people who not only allow you to express your emotions but also help broaden your perspective. Seek out a friend who takes the time to empathically listen to how you feel but then nudges you to consider, for example, how you've successfully dealt with similar situations or how small the problem will seem a year from now.

When internal chatter strikes, we can also improve how we feel in simple ways such as by performing rituals, increasing our exposure to green spaces or seeking out awe-inspiring experiences.

Awe is an emotion we feel when we encounter something powerful that we can't easily explain, like an incredible sunset or a transcendent piece of art. When you're in the presence of something vast and indescribable, it's hard to maintain the view that you are the center of the world, which improves how you feel by "shrinking" the causes of your stress.

While living in the present can be wonderful, thoughts that take us into the past, future or beyond aren't something to avoid, in spite of the painful moments they can bring.

Introspection is central to the makeup of the human mind. The challenge is to minimize the negative aspects of that essential feature while harnessing its potential. Fortunately, science-based tools exist to help us do that. Being cognizant of how our minds and these tools work can help us keep internal chatter at bay.

Looking for the light in the depths of February

By MARY SCHMICH
Chicago Tribune

Mary Schmich is a columnist for the Chicago Tribune *and winner of the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for commentary.*

Every year about this time, when we've reach the psychological pit of winter—when it seems we will always be cold, the ground will always be frozen, the trees will always look dead—I think about the wisdom of Dr. Jadwiga Roguska-Kyts.

I've told this story before but it's worth telling again, because we reach these depths every year. Here in the pit of winter, the novelty of the new year is long gone and spring is still a rumor. Day after gray day, we're either underdressed or overdressed because, inexplicably, 6 degrees can mean something wildly different on Thursday than it did on Tuesday.

We wear boots as heavy as bricks and coats that smell of old sweat because, inexplicably, it is possible to sweat even when you're freezing. Snow shovels strain our backs, icy sidewalks menace our bones and the routine act of taking out the garbage becomes a herculean feat.

We can find things to love, of course. Every season has its charms. But the charms of this one are as fleeting as snowflakes. We cheer the sun, then the clouds come. We admire that fresh snow, but it's soon a pile of snirt. We tell ourselves that staying indoors is cozy, and it is, until it makes us crazy.

In other words, it can be a difficult season for many people, even when we're not slogging through a pandemic.

It was difficult for me the year I went to see Dr. Roguska, as she was known, about my malaise. Until her retirement a few years ago, she was my internist, a small, bright-eyed, white-haired woman, trained in Poland before she came to Chicago, the kind of old-fashioned physician who started every visit by sitting you down at her desk to chat. She seemed to believe that to treat you, she needed to get to know you.

That day, I explained to her that I'd been inexplicably blue. I was trying to avoid the word "depressed." Glum, I said. Down. Anxious. Cranky. OK, maybe depressed. Did I need a therapist? I wondered. Medication?

She listened, nodded, pondered. Then, in her crisp, cheery Polish accent, she offered her diagnosis.

"It's February," she said. "It's winter."

And that was all the medicine I needed. The disease had been named—February!—and the naming of it was the beginning of the cure. I went back into the cold, gray day with a lighter heart, and every year since, I've conjured those comforting words as medicine.

Are you anxious, lethargic, mad at half of everybody? It's February.

February 2021 comes with added challenges. We've living through the havoc of a pandemic and the bitterness of a former president's impeachment trial. In Chicago, we're experiencing one of the coldest winters since 1875, and more snow than normal.

And that's why, in the spirit of Dr. Roguska, I made a list the other day of February's bright spots. Here's mine. I encourage you to make your own.

One: The days are getting longer. Every day, we add more than two minutes of sunlight. We got 10 hours of daylight daily when the month started. We'll have more than 11 when it ends.

Two: The Art Institute of Chicago, along with other museums, just reopened. "Something about that feels so poignant to me," said a friend, "and I can't quite put my finger on it. It's bitterly cold out, we're in the middle of a pandemic, our nation is in turmoil—but then you can still go inside a place like that and feel grounded by the enduring traditions of our civilization."

Three: The indoor gardens of the Garfield Park Conservatory on Chicago's West Side are reopening at the end of February. Merely looking at the photos float past on social media—luxurious, giant green leaves, huge yellow water lilies—creates a springtime for the mind.

Four: Chicago's public schoolteachers finally struck a deal that will get many kids back in classrooms soon.

Five: Though the COVID-19 vaccine rollout has been chaotic and frustrating, people are steadily being vaccinated.

Six: Watching squirrels in the snow is surprisingly good entertainment.

It's February. Dr. Roguska's wisdom—understanding that our moods often cycle along with the seasons—won't fix everything that ails everybody, especially not this winter. But it can help. The light is coming back, in its own time, and we'll appreciate it all the more because it's been gone.

Ineffective impeachment process allows Donald Trump to elude accountability for Capitol riot

By GROMER JEFFERS JR.
The Dallas Morning News

Gromer Jeffers Jr. is a political writer for The Dallas Morning News.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell has spent four years defending the actions Donald Trump.

Now, after the former president's second impeachment, the powerful Republican conceded that the former president is "practically and morally responsible for provoking" the Jan. 6 riot at the Capitol.

"No question about it," McConnell said Saturday. "The people who stormed this building believed they were acting on the wishes and instructions of their president, and having that belief was a foreseeable consequence of the growing crescendo of false statements, conspiracy theories and reckless hyperbole which the defeated president kept shouting into the largest megaphone on planet earth."

Still, McConnell and 42 other Republicans voted against convicting Trump of inciting the marauders that stormed the Capitol. The acquittal means Trump is free to run for president in 2024.

McConnell said that Trump's actions — as deplorable as they appear — are irrelevant because the Senate didn't have standing to rule on the case. McConnell's position is rejected by many legal scholars, and the Senate, including some Republicans, who voted that it was constitutional for senators to consider convicting Trump and disqualifying him from holding public office again.

Trump's acquittal exposes that the process of impeaching a president is a feckless endeavor that puts partisan politics ahead of holding officials accountable for their actions.

The framers of the Constitution wanted impeaching and removing a president from office to be difficult, rare and immune to political vendettas. But leaving the Senate to try a president on impeachment charges means the outcome of the process will hinge on the political dynamic at play, not the evidence presented at the trial.

There are 48 Democrats, two independents and 50 Republicans in the Senate. Since the independents caucus with the Democrats, Democrats control the chamber. But House managers failed to get two-thirds of the Senate to vote to convict Trump. Only seven Republicans joined Democrats in voting to hold Trump accountable for the Jan. 6 riot. Notably, that's more bipartisanship than is typically seen in impeachment trials.

Even though members of his own party believed Trump helped cause and fuel the insurrection at the Capitol, the House members and senators are powerless to hold him accountable because politics trump facts.

McConnell pointed out that if Trump pays a legal price for his actions, it will be through the nation's criminal justice system. That's unlikely because "incitement" as a legal definition could be much harder to prove in a court of law than in an impeachment trial.

Trump's true trial will be conducted by the American people, and in that respect this week's impeachment proceedings are useful. If the people believe Trump must pay a price for the events of Jan. 6, he'll never again be a serious contender for president. His status as leader of the Republican Party will fade.

Politicians are driven by public opinion. Most Republicans believe that bucking the president will result in them having a political price to pay. That's not exactly a testament in political courage, but it's a political reality.

But another reckoning with Trump is on the horizon. The former president is signaling that's he's not leaving the political scene.

"We have so much work ahead of us," Trump said in a statement after his acquittal.

It's up to Americans to decide Trump's future standing and his place in history. And Republican voters will determine whether to stick with Trump, or transition to other leaders.

Trump once said that he could shoot someone on Fifth Avenue in New York and not lose his supporters.

That view again will be put to the test.

CDC

From Page 8

household to wear masks in shared spaces inside your home for 14 days after travel."

It's the test-and-quarantine information after a trip that Bornstein is concerned that many don't understand. "No one is even talking about that … employers, states, the media. Everybody is kind of focused on the vaccines," he said in an interview with an editorial writer.

Hewing to the recommendation would require travelers to book an extra week or even 10 days out of the office. "I haven't seen people building that buffer in. It's very concerning to me," Bornstein said.

The CDC post-travel guidelines are recommendations, not requirements. A better way to look at them is as a responsibility. It's still best to stay home. But if you must travel, understand and act on your obligations to protect yourself and others.

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Sweet and Sour Senescent Sonnets

LITERARY NOOK
By JOEY 'PEPE BATBON' CONNOLLY
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.

"Well I'll be damned Here comes your ghost again
But that's not unusual It's just that the moon is full
And you happened to call"

—Joan Baez, Diamonds and Rust

Slights Delights and Insights

Well I'll be damned I just can't stop getting older now
this nonstop aging process brings slight after slight
entering the Chinese New Year of the White Metal Cow
our fear of COVID is not slight every virus filled night.

I 'got mail' and phone call messages left by friends
my spirits are lifted from these cyber stream delights
delighted to speak with them before the day ends
as we laugh and talk about old childhood fights.

We hear of others our age in an old folks home
some beat COVID some gone after sleepless nights
now families grieve many spouses left alone
old age has its positive and negative insights.

Forget the slights forgive others and learn to trust
discern the connections between diamonds and rust.

The 'I's Have It/His 'Id' Has It

"The word 'id' in psychoanalysis is "that part of the psyche that is regarded as the reservoir of the instinctual drives and the source of psychic energy: it is dominated by the pleasure principle and irrational wishing."

Insurrection Inauguration Impeachment

45 DEFENDS in DENIAL and DELUSION
INTELLIGENCE INVESTIGATES IGNORANCE
ILLITERACY IMBECILITY and IDIOCY
ILLEGAL ILL advised INVESTMENT
INDEFENSIBLE INEFFICIENCY lack of INTEGRITY
INCONSISTENT INCOHERENT * ignis fatuus
IGNORAMUS IGNOMINY ILLOGICAL
INCORRIGIBLE INEXCUSABLE INDICTED
INQUIRING IMPOSSIBILITIES IMMUNITY
INTOLERANT IMPETUOUS IMPLODING
INJUDICIOUS INCOMMUNICADO INIMICAL
INHUMANE IGNOMINIOUS INFECTED 'id'

IMPEACHED IN PERSONAM IN MEMORIAM.

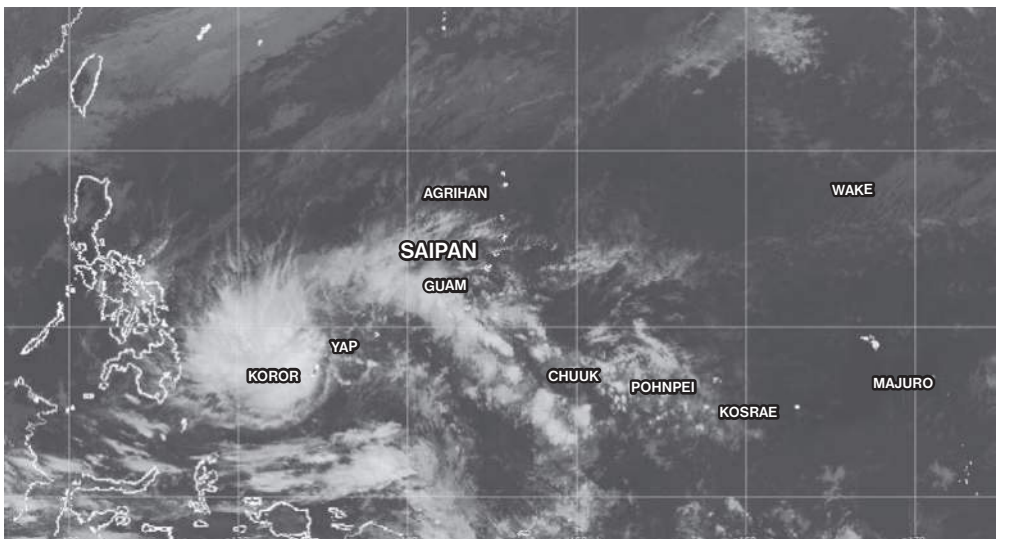
**Ignis fatuus is a deceptive hope, goal, delusion.*

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly sunny with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Mostly sunny with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
86º 76º	86º 76º	87º 77º	87º 77º	86º 76º

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:55 AM, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Little change to the current forecast. Satellite imagery indicate only a few showers over the local islands. The sounding from Tuesday night depicted a dry atmosphere with a Precipitable Water Index of 1.11 inches and the 700 mb Relative humidity at 10 percent. Models keep the 700 mb relative humidity below 50 percent through much of the forecast. The shallow moisture will equal only isolated showers at best through the forecast. Multiple model total rainfall accumulation amounts through next Wednesday will be below a half an inch. Winds of 10 to 15 mph are expected through the forecast.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	66º / 49º
Palau	Thunderstorms	84º / 77º
Yap	Partly Cloudy	85º / 79º
Chuuk	Showers	84º / 80º
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	84º / 79º
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	84º / 79º
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	85º / 79º

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:40 AM	6:21 PM
Friday	6:39 AM	6:22 PM
Saturday	6:39 AM	6:22 PM
Sunday	6:38 AM	6:22 PM
Monday	6:38 AM	6:22 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	10:47 AM	11:38 PM	-
Friday	11:25 AM	-	-
Saturday	-	12:27 AM	12:06 PM
Sunday	-	1:18 AM	12:50 PM
Monday	-	2:10 AM	1:39 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Sunny	79º / 63º
Beijing	Sunny	43º / 21º
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	72º / 63º
Honolulu	Showers	80º / 66º
London	Mostly Sunny	48º / 32º
Los Angeles	Sunny	69º / 47º
Manila	Partly Cloudy	91º / 75º
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	70º / 52º
Miami	Sunny	80º / 69º
New York	Cloudy	63º / 48º
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	50º / 36º
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	52º / 34º
Busan	Partly Cloudy	52º / 32º
Rome	Sunny	54º / 30º
Salem	Cloudy	76º / 61º
San Francisco	Sunny	61º / 44º
Seoul	Sunny	37º / 19º
Tokyo	Cloudy	46º / 36º
Washington, DC	Cloudy	72º / 59º

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
5:39 AM	Low Tide	0.61
11:41 AM	High Tide	1.55
6:45 PM	Low Tide	0.37
-	-	-

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❑ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❑ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❑ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❑ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2021

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 6
UA117	7:00am	7:40am	4

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 6
UA174	5:15am	5:56am	4

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:55pm	5:56am+1	3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	5
UA184	10:55pm	4:40am+1	1, 3

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 9, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sat
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

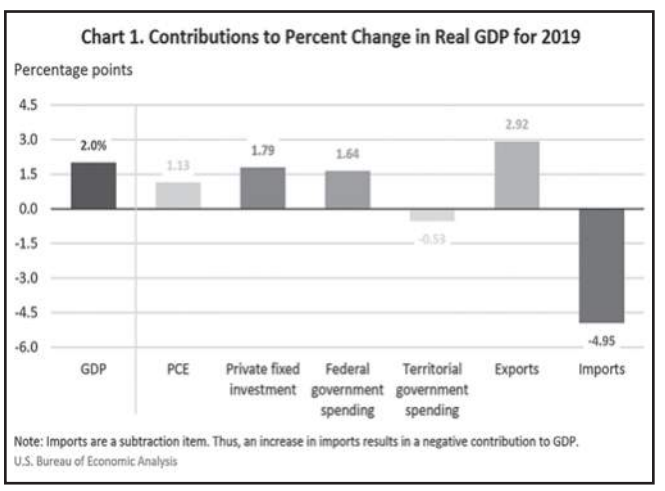
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

BEA report that Guam's 2019 GDP grew 2%

The Bureau of Economic Analysis released yesterday its estimates of gross domestic product for Guam for 2019, in addition to estimates of GDP by industry and compensation by industry for 2018.1 These estimates were developed under the Statistical Improvement Program funded by the Office of Insular Affairs of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Gross Domestic Product for 2019

The estimates of GDP for Guam show that real GDP—GDP adjusted to remove price changes—increased 2.0% in 2019.



As shown in Chart 1, the increase in real GDP reflected increases in exports, private fixed investment, federal government spending, and consumer spending. These increases were partly offset by an increase in imports, which are a subtraction in the calculation of GDP, and a decline in territorial government spending.

Exports of services, which consists primarily of spending by tourists, increased 15.6%. This reflected a record high in visitor arrivals for the year and growth in average spending by Korean and Japanese tourists, who make up much of Guam's tourist market.

Overall, investment spending contributed positively to the economy. Spending on construction and equipment for defense and private projects increased but was partly offset by declines in territorial government investment spending. Private fixed investment grew 8.9%; business spending on construction increased following project delays in 2017 and 2018.

Consumer spending also increased; the eighth increase in the last nine years. Spending increased on both goods and services, largely reflecting growth in retail trade activity and health care services, respectively.2

GDP by industry and compensation by industry for 2018

The estimates of GDP by industry show that the government sector was the source of the decline in real GDP in 2018. Federal and territorial government decreased, reflecting declines in employment and hours paid.

The private sector expanded in 2018, partly offsetting the decrease in the government sector. The largest contributor to private sector growth was construction, reflecting growth in private sector work on defense projects.3

The compensation by industry estimates, which are measured in current dollars, show trends in compensation for major industries. Total compensation increased in 2018, primarily reflecting growth in the private sector. Within the private sector, the largest contributors were construction and "other private."4

The accompanying tables present estimates for GDP and its major components, GDP by industry, and compensation by industry. Also included in this release are estimates for the major components of gross domestic income.

Revisions to GDP and related estimates

This release also includes the results of a comprehensive update of the territorial economic accounts. Comprehensive updates are typically performed every five years, based on the Census Bureau's every-5-years economic censuses of island areas.

With the comprehensive update, estimates for 2002 to 2018 have been revised to incorporate improvements to source data and methods, including information from:

- The U.S. Census Bureau's 2017 Economic Census of Island Areas, which provides the most thorough and detailed statistics on the structure of the Guam economy;
- County Business Patterns data for 2017 and 2018 from the U.S. Census Bureau;
- Hospital cost reports data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services;
- BEA's U.S. national income and product accounts; and
- Guam government data sources, such as building permit data and newly available fiscal year 2019 audited government financial statements.

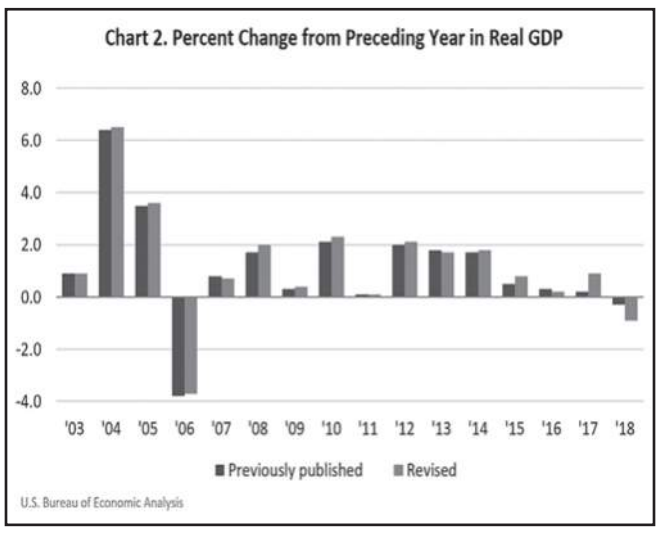


Chart 2 shows that the new estimates exhibit a pattern of inflation-adjusted GDP growth similar to the previously published estimates. However, there are notable revisions within the components of GDP, including to consumer spending and private fixed investment.

The revisions to consumer spending primarily reflect the incorporation of an improved estimation method for health care services for all years. Previously, estimates for health care services provided to households, including by hospitals, were benchmarked every five years to ECIA data on total revenues. Now, services provided by the government hospital are estimated for all years using annual data on net patient revenues from financial statements. For 2015 forward, CMS cost report data on net patient revenues of private sector hospitals are used for the first time.5 The cost report data replaced estimates of private sector services that had been extrapolated based on payroll data. The effect of the updated estimation method on the growth of GDP was largest for 2015 forward, as the newly incorporated CMS data showed a different pattern of growth than payroll data.

Estimates of private fixed investment were also revised, primarily reflecting the incorporation of more detailed building permit data into the annual indicators for construction activity for 2013 forward.6

The reference year for inflation-adjusted measures has been updated to 2012. This is the same reference year used in BEA's national GDP estimates.

The estimates of GDP by industry and compensation by industry have been updated to incorporate the above data sources.

Future directions

OIA and BEA will work to extend and improve the estimates of GDP for Guam. The information provided by the Guam government will continue to be critical to the successful production of these estimates.

BEA plans to release GDP estimates for 2020 for Guam in the fall of 2021. GDP by industry and compensation by industry estimates for 2019 will be released at the same time.

[1]These estimates are based on limited source data and are subject to revision.
[2]Health care services include those directly financed by government social benefits such as Medicaid.
[3]Construction activities performed by private companies on behalf of the government sector are reflected within private sector industry value added.
[4]"Other private" includes all private sector industries not separately shown in Table 2.6, such as professional, scientific, and technical services and health care services.
[5]Guam's first private sector hospital opened in July 2015. Revenues for the first half-year of operation were prorated based on 2016 data from CMS.
[6]The estimates of private fixed investment are benchmarked to capital expenditures information from the 2012 ECIA. ***(PR)***

MINA installs 10 monofilament recycling bins on Saipan

» Protecting wildlife by keeping the CNMI 'tangle-free'

By IVA MAURIN
iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

The Mariana Islands Nature Alliance recently launched a Monofilament Line Collectors pilot project to promote responsible fishing for recreational and non-commercial fishers on Saipan while also protecting marine life.

MINA is calling on everyone to help keep the waterways tangle-free by recycling used monofilament fishing lines in the 10 monofilament recycling bins the group had installed strategically on island.

Funding for the project was supported by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Pacific Islands Regional Office.

Ten bins have been installed in areas most often used by recreational hook and line fishers: Smiling Cove Marine, Garapan Fishing Base, and Sugar Dock. MINA's Tasi Watch Community Rangers collect the used fishing lines every week "and MINA plans to work with teachers in the hope they can reuse these fish lines for potential art projects," said MINA executive director Roberta Guerrero.

"The Monofilament Line bins help prevent fishing lines from entering the ocean and, as a result, will help save our marine life, including sea turtles, from harm," she added.

All over the world, carelessly discarded fishing lines pose a peril to wildlife, causing injuries and death, particularly among turtles and birds, which ingest or get entangled in the gear. Entanglement in carelessly discarded fishing lines moves the animals to struggle to escape, causing lacerations, which leads to exhaustion, starvation, and dehydration.

Worse, according to studies, monofilaments take 600 years to decompose.

NOAA Fisheries also advises fishermen to watch their gear and not leave them unattended, and to retrieve and recycle old lines and dispose of them responsibly.

Aside from the new monofilament recycling bins, MINA is also recruiting individuals to become part of the Tasi Watch Community Ranger Program, to further their mission in providing environmental service to the CNMI community.

For more information about MINA's monofilament lines, and the Tasi Watch Community Ranger Program, visit minapacific.org, or contact MINA via (670) 233-7333 or minaoutreach@gmail.com.

MINA was established on Saipan in 2005 as a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation.

To promote responsible fishing and help protect turtles and birds from getting entangled in fishing lines, 10 monofilament line bins have been strategically installed in high-usage areas on Saipan where fishermen can place their used monofilament lines to be collected and recycled. The bins are made possible through the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance's Monofilament Line Collectors pilot project, with support from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Pacific Islands Regional Office.

IVA MAURIN

Monofilament Recycling Bin
Help keep our waterways TANGLE-FREE
Please recycle your used monofilament fishing line here!
NO CANS · NO BOTTLES · NO TRASH
MINA

Business

Stayhill Resort is staycation central

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

From exclusively catering to tourists, Stayhill Resort has transformed itself into Saipan's very own staycation central.

Owner Junho Park said the 13-room establishment along Isa Drive in Papago opened a couple of years ago as a bed & breakfast for Korean and Chinese tourists.

The business model was that tourists would stay 2-3 days, taking advantage of Stayhill Resort's picturesque mountain-side view and private pool. They also have a massage room where tourists can get a relaxing rubdown after an hours-long trip from Korea or China or an exhausting day trip to Managaha Island and a shopping spree at DFS Galleria in Garapan.

Aside from serving as a B&B for tourists, Stayhill Resort was also being used as a waiting lounge for tourists who were about to leave for their home countries, as it's relatively close to the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport.

That all went down the drain when the CNMI stopped welcoming tourists in the first quarter of 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic ravaged not only world economies, but also the tourist industry.

That's when Park decided to pivot to the local market and opened Stayhill Resort last August for staycations at a budget-friendly rate. From a homey B&B and lounge, it's now open for birthdays, anniversaries, debuts, and just about any celebration every day of the week,

Currently, Stayhill Resort has a weekday (Monday-Thursday) promotion where $300 will allow customers to host their own private pool party for 30 people. It comes inclusive of free use of the swimming pool, barbecue facilities, jacuzzi, kitchen (stove, oven, refrigerators), karaoke, and, as a plus, Park is including the use of two free air-conditioned rooms.

Stayhill Resort is located along Isa Drive in Papago. MARK RABAGO

MARK RABAGO
The 13-room establishment offers private pool parties on weekdays.

The regular rate is $70 a night, including swimming pool access and/or barbecue party only for those staying overnight (Guests need to pay an entrance fee of $10 for adults and $8 for any minors under 18 years old). Whether weekdays or weekends, Stayhill Resort has a 2pm check in and 12pm checkout times.

MARK RABAGO
Stayhill Resort opened a couple of years ago as a bed & breakfast for Korean and Chinese tourists.

Park said the transition from a B&B to a staycation resort couldn't have been more successful as Stayhill Resort is booked on weekends for the next couple of months. "We've been having a lot of customers. In fact, all weekends are now booked until April," he said.

Stayhill Resort also has a current promotion for Tinian and Rota customers who are flying to Saipan for a vacation, medical referral, or shopping. The generous promotion is $95/day for one room and comes with a rental car, which includes insurance. It also has free pick-up at the airport and check-in time is anytime they come in (12pm is still the check-out time).

Future plans include importing a live band from South Korea once travel restrictions have been eased, according to Park.

"Please do try our accommodations at Stayhill Resort. It'll be your home away from home. All of us can't travel off-island this time due to COVID-19. Please do try a staycation at our establishment. It's always breezy and in the mountains, away from the hustle and bustle of busy city life," said Park, who has made Saipan his home since coming to Saipan as a musician during the 1994 Liberation Day parade.

Reservations at Stayhill Resort require a 50% down. For more information or to make reservations, call Park at 483-9900 or 989-2902.

Highlights of COVID-19 relief bill progressing in House

WASHINGTON (AP)—A Democratic-led effort to pass a $1.9 trillion pandemic relief package has passed its latest challenge with House committees advancing measures that will soon be combined into a single bill expected to clear the full House by the end of February.

Democrats beat back hundreds of amendments from Republicans who have raised concerns that the spending is vastly more than necessary and designed to advance policy priorities that go beyond helping Americans get through the pandemic. Democrats and President Joe Biden counter that a robust aid package is necessary to prevent a long and painful recovery from the pandemic.

Their goal is to have COVID-19 relief approved by mid-March, when extra unemployment assistance and other pandemic aid expires.

A look at some highlights of the legislation moving through the House:

MORE CHECKS

The legislation provides a rebate that amounts to $1,400 for a single taxpayer, or $2,800 for a married couple that files jointly, plus $1,400 per dependent. Individuals earning up to $75,000 would get the full amount as would married couples with incomes up to $150,000.

The size of the check would shrink for those making slightly more with a hard cut-off at $100,000 for individuals and $200,000 for married couples.

Some Republicans want to cut the size of the rebate as well as the pool of Americans eligible for it, but Biden has insisted on $1,400 checks, saying "that's what the American people were promised." The new round of checks will cost the government an estimated $422 billion.

BIGGER TAX BREAK FOR HOUSEHOLDS WITH KIDS

Under current law, most taxpayers can reduce their federal income tax bill by up to $2,000 per child. The package moving through the House would increase the tax break to $3,000 for every child age 6 to 17 and $3,600 for every child under the age of 6.

The legislation also calls for the payments to be delivered monthly instead of in one lump sum. If the secretary of the Treasury determines that isn't feasible, then the payments are to be made as frequently as possible.

Also, families would get the full credit regardless of how little they make in a year, even just a few hundred dollars, leading to criticism that the changes would serve as a disincentive to work. Add in the $1,400 per individual checks and other items in the proposal, and the legislation would reduce the number of children living in poverty by more than half, according to an analysis from the Center on Poverty and Social Policy at Columbia University.

AID TO STATES AND CITIES

The legislation would send $350 billion to state and local governments and tribal governments. While Republicans in Congress have largely objected to this initiative, Biden's push has some GOP support among governors and mayors.

Many communities have taken hits to their tax base as millions of people have lost their jobs and as people stay home and avoid restaurants and stores to prevent getting COVID-19. Many areas have also seen expenses rise as they work to treat the sick and ramp up vaccinations.

But the impact varies from state to state and from town to town. Critics say the funding is not appropriately targeted and is far more than necessary with billions of dollars allocated last spring to states and communities still unspent.

AID TO SCHOOLS

The bill calls for $130 billion in additional help to schools for students in kindergarten through 12th grade. The money would be used to reduce class sizes and modify classrooms to enhance social distancing, install ventilation systems and purchase personal protective equipment. The money could also be used to increase the hiring of nurses, counselors and to provide summer school.

Spending for colleges and universities would be boosted by $40 billion, with the money used to defray an institution's pandemic-related expenses and to provide emergency aid to students to cover expenses such as food and housing and computer equipment.

AID TO BUSINESSES

The bill provides another round of relief for airlines and eligible contractors, $15 billion, so long as they refrain from furloughing workers or cutting pay through September. It's the third round of support for airlines.

A new program for restaurants and bars hurt by the pandemic would receive $25 billion. The grants provide up to $10 million per entity with a limit of $5 million per physical location. The grants can be used to cover payroll, rent, utilities and other operational expenses.

The bill also provides another $7.25 billion for the Paycheck Protection Program, a tiny fraction of what was allocated in previous legislation. The loans are designed to help borrowers meet their payroll and operating costs and can potentially be forgiven.

AID TO THE UNEMPLOYED

Expanded unemployment benefits from the federal government would be extended, with an increase from $300 a week to $400 a week. That's on top of what beneficiaries are getting through their state unemployment insurance program.

RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE

The bill would gradually raise the federal minimum wage to $15 per hour by June 2025 and then adjust it to increase at the same rate as median hourly wages.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office projected several positives and negatives that would occur if the minimum wage hike makes it over the finish line. On the plus side, about 900,000 people would be lifted out of poverty once the $15 hourly wage is fully in place. Some 17 million people making below the new minimum wage would see a pay raise. On the negative, about 1.4 million jobs would be lost as employers look for ways to offset their higher personnel costs.

It's unclear if the wage hike will make it through the Senate due to opposition among a handful of Democrats and possible procedural hurdles.

STOCK PORTFOLIO

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW	S&P	NASDAQ
31,522.75	3,932.59	14,047.50
+64.35	−2.24	−47.97
0.20%	0.057%	0.34%

EXCHANGE RATES

In U.S. dollar terms

Australian Dollar	1.29	Hong Kong Dollar	7.75	Russian Ruble	73.69
British Pound	0.72	Indian Rupee	72.90	Singapore Dollar	1.33
Canadian Dollar	1.27	Japanese Yen	105.94	South Korean Won	1106.86
Chinese Yuan	6.46	Malaysian Ringgit	4.04	Swiss Franc	0.89
Euro	0.83	New Zealand Dollar	1.39	Taiwan Dollar	28.00
		Philippine Peso	48.38	Thailand Baht	29.97

Nation

Millions endure record cold without power; at least 20 dead

OCEAN ISLE BEACH, N.C. (AP)—A winter storm that left millions without power in record-breaking cold weather claimed more lives Tuesday, including three people found dead after a tornado hit a seaside town in North Carolina and four family members who perished in a Houston-area house fire while using a fireplace to stay warm.

The storm that overwhelmed power grids and immobilized the Southern Plains carried heavy snow and freezing rain into New England and the Deep South and left behind painfully low temperatures. Wind-chill warnings extended from Canada into Mexico.

In all, at least 20 deaths were reported. Other causes included car crashes and carbon monoxide poisoning. The weather also threatened to affect the nation's COVID-19 vaccination effort. President Joe Biden's administration said delays in vaccine shipments and deliveries were likely.

North Carolina's Brunswick County had little notice of the dangerous weather, and a tornado warning was not issued until the storm was already on the ground.

The National Weather Service was "very surprised how rapidly this storm intensified ... and at the time of night when most people are at home and in bed, it creates a very dangerous situation," Emergency Services Director Ed Conrow said.

In Chicago, a foot and a half (46 centimeters) of new snow forced public schools to cancel in-person classes for Tuesday. Hours earlier, along the normally balmy Gulf of Mexico, cross-country skiier Sam Fagg hit fresh powder on the beach in Galveston, Texas.

The worst U.S. power outages were in Texas, affecting more than 2 million homes and businesses. More than 250,000 people also lost power across parts of Appalachia, and another 200,000 were without electricity following an ice storm in northwest Oregon, according to poweroutage.us, which tracks utility outage reports. Four million people lost power in Mexico.

Texas officials requested 60 generators from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and planned to prioritize hospitals and nursing homes. The state opened 35 shelters to more than 1,000 occupants, the agency said.

More than 500 people sought comfort at one Houston shelter. Mayor Sylvester Turner said other warming centers were closed because they lost power.

After losing power Monday, Natalie Harrell said she, her boyfriend and four kids sheltered at a Gallery Furniture store in Houston. The warming center at the store provided people with food, water and power to charge essential electronics.

'A complete bungle': Texas' energy pride goes out with cold

AUSTIN, Texas (AP)—Anger over Texas' power grid failing in the face of a record winter freeze mounted Tuesday as millions of residents in the energy capital of the U.S. remained shivering with no assurances that their electricity and heat—out for 36 hours or longer in many homes—would return soon or stay on once it finally does.

"I know people are angry and frustrated," said Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner, who woke up to more than 1 million people still without power in his city. "So am I."

In all, between 2 and 3 million customers in Texas still had no power nearly two full days after historic snowfall and single-digit temperatures created a surge in demand for electricity to warm up homes unaccustomed to such extreme lows, buckling the state's power grid and causing widespread blackouts. More bad weather, including freezing rain, was expected Tuesday night.

Making matters worse, expectations that the outages would be a shared sacrifice by the state's 30 million residents quickly gave way to a cold reality, as pockets in some of America's largest cities, including San Antonio, Dallas and Austin, were left to shoulder the lasting brunt of a catastrophic power failure, and in subfreezing conditions that Texas' grid operators had known was coming.

The breakdown sparked growing outrage and demands for answers over how Texas—whose Republican leaders as recently as last year taunted California over the Democratic-led state's rolling blackouts—failed such a massive test of a major point of state pride: energy independence. And it cut through politics, as fuming Texans took to social media to highlight how while their neighborhoods froze in the dark Monday night, downtown skylines glowed despite desperate calls to conserve energy.

Trump rips McConnell as GOP divide deepens post-Capitol riot

WASHINGTON (AP)—In the most caustic sign yet of deepening GOP divisions, former President Donald Trump blistered Mitch McConnell as a "political hack" on Tuesday, days after the Senate's top Republican denounced him as the inciter of U.S. Capitol attack.

"The Republican Party can never again be respected or strong with political 'leaders' like Sen. Mitch McConnell at its helm," Trump said in a statement released by his political action committee.

He went on to write: "Mitch is a dour, sullen, and unsmiling political hack, and if Republican Senators are going to stay with him, they will not win again."

A McConnell spokesperson did not immediately return requests for comment.

The deeply personal attack follows McConnell's speech over the weekend saying that Trump was responsible for the deadly insurrection at the Capitol on Jan. 6. But McConnell said that only after he joined other Republicans in voting against the former president's conviction during a Senate impeachment trial that accused Trump of inciting the mob.

"There's no question, none, that President Trump is practically and morally responsible for provoking the events of the day," McConnell said Saturday, after Trump, the only president to be impeached twice, was acquitted on a 57-43 vote. "The people who stormed this building believed they were acting on the wishes and instructions of their president."

McConnell said he voted to acquit Trump because the Senate has no jurisdiction over an ex-president—even though he had rejected a push from Democrats to start the trial when Trump was still in office. The House impeached Trump a week before he left office.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

† Vicenta Santos Muna Sablan

LOVINGLY KNOWN AS "LILY"

In her new life, she now joins her:
Parents: †Esteban Tudela Muna & †Maria Santos Muna "Terang"
Parents In-law: †Ricardo Salas Sablan, †Emilia Pangelinan Palacios & †Alfonso Arriola Palacios
Brother & Sister In-law: †Francisco Santos Muna & †Irene B. Muna
Brothers In-law: †David P. Sablan, †David C. Sablan, †Joaquin G. Adriano †Thomas F. Ada, †Gregorio CH. Baza;

Her memories will live in the hearts of her:
Husband: Jose Pangelinan Sablan
Children: Nanette S. Palacios & Joseph R. Palacios (Darwin Arriola & Liyan Aldan: Devin, Aryanna, Deanna, Dayton; Nathan S. Palacios; Katelyn S. Palacios; Jonessa S. Palacios); Jovinette M. Sablan & John B. Cruz (Antonio Cruz, Liliana Cruz); Leanette M. Sablan & Brandon C. Cabrera (Breanna Cabrera, Brandon Cabrera, Jr.)

Sister & Brothers and Spouses: Carmen S. Muna & family; Victor S. Muna/Junrong Jing Muna & family; †Francisco S. Muna/ †Irene B. Muna & family; Gilbert S. Muna; Gerald S. Muna / Melinda I. Muna & family

Sisters and Brothers In-law: Isidro Cabrera/Bernie S. Cabrera & family; Antonio P. Sablan/Patricia Concepcion & family; Consuelo Park-Baza/†Gregorio CH Baza & family; Marian P. Palacios/Alvin Ogo & family; Barbara P. Ada/†Thomas F. Ada & family; Alexander P. Sablan & family; Donald P. Palacios/Elizabeth Tebuteb & family; Regina P. Pangelinan; Albert P. Palacios/Trisha B. Palacios & family; Summer P. Palacios/Kevin Babauta & family; Tina P. Flores/Erwin Flores & family; Jessica Palacios & family; Dorothy Palacios & family; Marina Borja & family; Melanie/William Camacho & family; Benigno C. Sablan/ Kulani DLG. Sablan & family; Ricardo C. Sablan/Tina A. Sablan & family; Catherine C. Sablan & family; Glenn C. Sablan/Karen Sablan & family; Vincent C. Sablan; Francisco C. Sablan & family; Manuel C. Sablan/Shanon Mafnas; Jesse C. Sablan/Kiani C. Sablan & family; Rosannie C. Sablan /Jesse Cabrera & family.

San Antonio Church
Saturday: 6:00 p.m.
Tuesday: 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday: 6:00 p.m.
Sunday: 7:00 a.m.

Saint Jude Church
Monday: 6:00 p.m.
Thursday: 6:00 p.m.
Friday: 6:00 p.m

Daily mass is being offered for our dearly beloved starting Wednesday, February 10, 2021. Funeral services will be announced at a later date.

We thank you for your thoughts and prayers.

From Jose P. Sablan & Family

Asia

PH court junks election protest by Marcos' son

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippine Supreme Court has dismissed an election protest by the son of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos, thwarting his attempt to overturn his narrow defeat in the 2016 vice presidential election in what could have been a stunning political comeback.

The 15-member court, which voted as an electoral tribunal, unanimously rejected the protest filed by Ferdinand Marcos Jr. after he lost to opposition leader Leni Robredo, court spokesperson Brian Hosaka said Tuesday.

Marcos Jr. did not immediately comment on the court decision. Robredo expressed relief and thanked her supporters, lawyers and the justices "for their fairness and resolve."

"Even if they tried to tarnish the legitimacy of my mandate, the trust remained," Robredo said at a news conference. She asked everybody "to put the rancor behind us" and press ahead with efforts to address poverty worsened by the coronavirus pandemic.

Marcos Jr. lost to Robredo, a human rights lawyer, by more than 263,000 votes in the race for the vice presidency, the highest political office that was close to being captured by the family of the ex-dictator, who was ousted in an army-backed "people power" revolt in 1986. The Marcoses fled to Hawaii, where the ousted leader died three years later while facing massive human rights and corruption charges.

AP

In this April 2, 2018, file photo, former Senator Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. talks to reporters in front of the Philippine Supreme Court in Manila, Philippines.

The dictator's widow, Imelda Marcos, and her children eventually returned to the Philippines, where she ran and lost in the 1992 presidential election. Marcos Jr. won a Senate seat in 2010 and then set his eyes on the vice presidency in 2016.

In a court-approved recount of votes in three provinces selected by Marcos Jr., Robredo's lead increased by about 15,000 votes in one key setback in his protest. Robredo, who won the vice presidency with more than 14 million votes, asked the court to dismiss Marcos' protest.

Presidential legal counsel Salvador Panelo said everybody must abide by the court's decision. "There is always another election to vindicate one's loss or validate forever one's rejection by the voting population," he said.

In the Philippines, the president and vice president are elected separately. Robredo has come under attack by President Rodrigo Duterte for her criticism of his bloody crackdown on illegal drugs and his sexist remarks.

EXPLAINER: Japan begins vaccination drive, but why so late?

TOKYO (AP)—Japan rolls out its COVID-19 vaccination campaign Wednesday after the government gave belated first approval to a shot co-developed by Pfizer Inc. that the U.S. and many other countries started using two months ago.

Some in Japan, where relatively rare side effects from vaccines tend to be played up, are in no hurry to get the shot. That reluctance could prove to be a big problem for the Tokyo Olympics scheduled for this summer after a year's delay. Vaccinations are considered a key to holding the games.

With domestic vaccine development still in its early stages, import-reliant Japan faces uncertainty in its supply. It's also unclear if the already-strained Japanese health care system will be able to treat the extra visitors during the games as they juggle local patients and the mass inoculations.

The AP looks at why Japan, the world's third-biggest economy, is so late in pursuing coronavirus vaccinations.

WHY THE DELAY?

It's mostly because the government asked for clinical testing in Japan in addition to Pfizer's multinational tests, which did not include Japan.

Dozens of countries accepted the results of the Pfizer tests released in November and moved ahead. Pfizer applied for emergency approval in Japan in December, based on the overseas data, but Tokyo waited for results of Japanese tests submitted in late January before giving a green light on Sunday.

This all happened in two months, much faster that the one-year average that is usual for Japan, known for being cautious and bogged down in bureaucracy.

The approval process for another supplier, AstraZeneca, only started recently, while a third, Moderna Inc. hasn't applied yet in Japan.

WHY DID JAPAN ASK FOR MORE DATA?

People in Japan are often skeptical about vaccines, and officials felt they needed to address safety concerns thoroughly.

Health Minister Norihisa Tamura said last week that Asians comprised "only a small percent" of Pfizer tests, which were conducted from July to November on about 44,000 people in six countries.

Even so, that means the data included samples of about 2,000 Asians. Some critics are questioning whether the additional tests on only 160 Japanese people added anything—except more delay.

Taro Kono, administrative reform minister for vaccinations, defended the delay. "It was more important for the government to show the Japanese people that everything was done" to encourage taking the vaccines, he said.

WHY IS CONFIDENCE SO LOW IN JAPAN?

Japan's mistrust of vaccines is decades old. Many people have a vague unease about vaccines, partly because their side effects have often been played up.

World

France passes anti-radicalism bill

PARIS (AP)—Lawmakers in the French parliament's lower house on Tuesday overwhelmingly approved a bill that would strengthen oversight of mosques, schools and sports clubs to safeguard France from radical Islamists and to promote respect for French values - one of President Emmanuel Macron's landmark projects.

After two weeks of intense debate, the vote in the National Assembly house was the first critical hurdle for the legislation that has been long in the making. The bill passed 347-151, with 65 abstentions.

With France bloodied by terror attacks, having hundreds of citizens who went to Syria in years past and thousands of French troops now fighting extremists in Mali, few disagree that radicalization is a danger. But critics also see the proposed law as a political ploy to lure the right wing to Macron's centrist party ahead of next year's presidential election.

The wide-ranging bill, titled "Supporting respect for the principles of the Republic," covers most aspects of French life. It has been hotly contested by some Muslims, lawmakers and others who fear the state is intruding on essential freedoms and pointing a finger at Islam, the nation's No. 2 religion.

But the legislation breezed through a chamber in which Macron's party has a majority. It is not set to go to the conservative-controlled Senate until March 30, but final passage is seen as all but assured.

The bill gained added urgency after a teacher was beheaded outside Paris in October and three people were killed during a knife attack at a Nice basilica the same month.

» Legislation worries Muslims

A section that makes it a crime to knowingly endanger the life of a person by providing details of their private life and location is known as the ''Paty law.'' It was named for Samuel Paty, the teacher who was killed outside his school after information about where he taught was posted online in a video.

The bill bolsters other French efforts to fight extremism, mainly security-based.

Detractors say the measures are already covered in current laws. Some voice suspicions about a hidden political agenda.

Days before Tuesday's vote, Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin - the bill's main sponsor - accused far-right leader Marine Le Pen during a nationally televised debate of being "soft" on radical Islam, saying she needs to take vitamins.

The remark was intended to portray the government as tougher than the far-right in tackling Islamic extremists. But Le Pen criticized the bill as too weak and offered what she called her own, tougher counter-proposal. Le Pen, who has declared her presidential candidacy for the 2022 election, lost in the 2017 runoff against Macron.

Jordan Bardella, vice president of Le Pen's National Rally party. said on BFM TV that the legislation approved Tuesday "misses its target" because it doesn't attack radical Islamist ideology head-on, .

The bill mentions neither Muslims nor Islam by name. Supporters say it is aimed at snuffing out what the government describes as an encroaching fundamentalism that is subverting French values, notably the nation's foundational value of secularism and gender equality.

The measure has been dubbed the "separatism" bill, a term used by Macron to refer to radicals who would create a "counter society" in France.

South Africa readies to give J&J jabs to health care workers

JOHANNESBURG (AP)—South Africa is preparing to give its first COVID-19 vaccinations—shots of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine still being tested—to health care workers this week, the health minister said Tuesday.

The first batch of 80,000 doses of the J&J vaccine, which has not been authorized for general use in South Africa or anywhere else in the world, is expected to arrive in the country imminently and will be administered to health care professionals across the country, Zweli Mkhize told parliament.

The J&J vaccines will be given as an observational study, in which no placebo shots will be given and the health and future infections of all participants will be tracked, say health experts.

Tests so far suggest the J&J vaccine is safe and effective at preventing severe illness or death from COVID-019.

Another 500,000 J&J doses are expected to be flown to South Africa within four weeks for the vaccination campaign.

More than 380,000 health care workers have already registered for vaccination, Mkhize said. The first phase of South Africa's campaign is to vaccinate the country's 1.25 million health care workers.

"We salute the health care workers who have chosen vaccination for their own protection and the protection of their colleagues, families and community members," Mkhize said, encouraging all front-line health workers to register on the government's internet site.

South Africa has set up 20 vaccination centers in its nine provinces to inoculate the 80,000 health workers over the next two weeks. This will be done by 164 vaccinators who will each give shots to approximately 48 people a day at the rate of six to seven clients an hour, Mkhize said.

"As more doses arrive the service will be ramped up accordingly to ensure that we maintain a good rate of daily vaccines," said Mkhize.

South Africa intends to vaccinate 40 million people, representing about 67% of its population, by the end of the year, according to Mkhize.

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine will be the first to be used as it is shown by a large international clinical trial to be effective in offering protection from the variant that is now dominant in South Africa, he said. Early results from the trials shown the J&J vaccines has 57% efficacy against moderate to severe cases of COVID-19 caused by the variant here.

In the United States, the Food and Drug Administration is due to consider the J&J trial on Feb. 26 and the European authority is also planning to assess it in mid-March.

South Africa has purchased 9 million doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and an additional 20 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine, which are expected in the country by the end of March, Mkhize said.

Life & Style

Missing Dubai princess re-emerges in videos at 'jail villa'

LONDON (AP)—A daughter of Dubai's powerful ruler who tried to flee the country in 2018 only to be detained by commandos in a boat off India has re-emerged in new videos published Tuesday, saying she doesn't know if she's "going to survive this situation."

The videos released by the BBC show Sheikha Latifa bint Mohammed Al Maktoum at a "jail villa," apparently located in the skyscraper-studded city-state in the United Arab Emirates. Her father, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, also serves as the prime minister and vice president in the hereditarily ruled UAE.

"I'm a hostage," the sheikha says in one video. "This villa has been converted into jail.

"I can't even go outside to get any fresh air," she also said.

The government's Dubai Media Office did not immediately respond to a request for comment from The Associated Press.

Al Maktoum

In 2018, the AP reported how a friend and an ex-French spy helped Sheikha Latifa escape by boat, only to be captured off India.

The BBC said Sheikha Latifa recorded the videos in a bathroom at the villa over months on a phone she secretly received about a year after her capture.

"I don't know when I'll be released and what the conditions will be like when I'm released," she says in a video. "Every day I am worried about my safety and my life."

The videos, part of an episode of BBC's "Panorama" investigative series being broadcast Tuesday, also include an interview with Mary Robinson, a former president of Ireland and U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights. Robinson appeared in photos with Latifa published by Emirati officials after the sheikha's return to Dubai in 2018.

Robinson told the BBC that she had been misled by Emirati authorities who told her Latifa was a troubled young woman safe in the care of her family.

"I was particularly tricked when the photographs went public," Robinson told the BBC. "That was a total surprise.... I was absolutely stunned."

The dramatic would-be sea escape and its aftermath intruded into the carefully controlled image maintained by the family of Sheikh Mohammed, who is believed to have several dozen children from multiple wives. Some of his sons and daughters figure prominently in local media and online, but others are rarely seen. Sheikha Latifa was widely known for her love of skydiving prior to 2018.

'Game of Thrones' stars Harington, Leslie welcome baby boy

LONDON (AP)—The house of Harington and Leslie has an heir.

"Game of Thrones" stars Rose Leslie and Kit Harington have welcomed a baby boy, their first child together.

Harington's publicist Marianna Shafran confirmed the birth Tuesday, saying Harington and Leslie are "very very happy!"

No further details were given.

It's the first child for both the 34-year-old Scottish actor Leslie and the 34-year-old English actor Harington, who married in 2018.

They announced in September that they were expecting the child.

The New York Post's Page Six first reported the news of the birth after publishing a photo of the couple running errands with the baby in London.

Their relationship began in 2011 on the set of HBO's "Game of Thrones" where they played star-crossed lovers Jon Snow and Ygritte, he a brother of the Night's Watch with world-changing secrets in his past, she a part of the rebel wildlings.

AP
Rose Leslie, left, and Kit Harington arrive at the 77th annual Golden Globe Awards on Jan. 5, 2020, in Beverly Hills, Calif.

Investigators: No sign of arson at camp for ill children

ASHFORD, Conn. (AP)—Investigators said Tuesday they don't believe arson was responsible for last week's fire that destroyed a large section of Paul Newman's Hole in the Wall Gang Camp for seriously ill children.

The fire marshal's office in Ashford said the investigation was continuing, but told the Hartford Courant that dogs had not detected any signs of an accelerant in the rubble and there were no footprints in the snow around the buildings that burned.

The camp, which had only online programming last summer because of the coronavirus pandemic, plans to reopen with a limited schedule this year, said Ryan Thompson, a spokesperson for the charity.

"I can say that we still plan to resume on-site and residential family programming at camp this spring and host eight, four-day family camps this summer," he said. "All the programming will, of course, be modified to ensure a safe experience for all amid the COVID-19 pandemic."

An automated fire alarm alerted authorities to the blaze which broke out just before 5 p.m. on Friday. It destroyed two of the camp's buildings, including a large wood-frame structure that was made to look like the center of an old western town. Different sections of the building were constructed to look like separate buildings, housing different programs, such as arts and crafts and the camp store.

Tyler Perry, Clintons attend memorial for actor Cicely Tyson

NEW YORK (AP)—Tyler Perry and Bill and Hillary Clinton were among the attendees of a private memorial service for Cicely Tyson at Harlem's famed Abyssinian Baptist Church.

Gospel singer Bebe Winans sang "Stand"—a request from Tyson before her death—and a letter was read by rocker Lenny Kravitz, who was a close friend.

"The ceremony was beautiful. It was very Cicely Tyson: It was formal, it was humorous, it was sad, it was glorious," said Larry Thompson, Tyson's manager for more than 40 years.

Reporters were not permitted inside but several mourners stopped to share their thoughts afterward.

Abyssinian Baptist's pastor, the Rev. Calvin O. Butts, said Tyson was an example of "a life well lived and an example of how we all might live," adding, "She was as much an ambassador for peace and love as anybody I can think of."

He noted that Tyson's service fell during Black History Month, giving us "another illustration of some of the great people who have contributed to American arts and culture."

Crabby distant relative is an unwelcome freeloader

DEAR ABBY: My husband is an amazing guy. We have a very nice life except for an older sort-of family member who is living with us.

"Nathan" has been living in the house for years, but he isn't a blood relative. He's my husband's late stepfather's brother. Nathan is a several-times-divorced curmudgeon who was living in a shed. He was allowed to stay here to get on his feet and, partially, out of respect for the stepfather.

Nathan refuses to help out in any way. He comes and goes as he pleases and is living rent-free. We pay the mortgage and all the bills. Nathan buys food and stuff for himself, but then will eat the household food my mother-in-law buys.

I'm tired of the garbage he makes. He smokes in his room, and he's nasty, rude and demanding. He needs to move out or pay up, but my husband doesn't want to do anything. Advice?

UNHAPPY AT HOME

DEAR UNHAPPY: Just this. Realize that nothing will change until your husband is finally willing to put his foot down and insist on some changes, or the freeloader leaves this earthly plane for the next. I would have used the phrase "goes to heaven," but it appears Nathan is already experiencing heaven right here on Earth, so do not expect him to move on his own.

DEAR ABBY: I was recently informed that my best friend of 10 years, "Darlene," planned to ghost me as soon as she got pregnant. I'm shocked that she would say such a thing or plan to do it. I always thought I was a good friend.

But now Darlene and her husband are getting a divorce, and she has been all chummy. I have a sour taste in my mouth. Do I stay friends and get over it, or give her her wish and disappear?

UNFRIENDED IN THE WEST

DEAR UNFRIENDED: Are you sure the person who informed you about her plan is credible? Could they be jealous of the close friendship you have with Darlene? Frankly, it would be incredibly stupid for a person planning to ghost someone to tell a mutual friend who might leak it before the fact. Talk to Darlene! Do not end the friendship unless you are absolutely certain what you were told was the gospel.

DEAR ABBY: My 82-year-old mother made a special request of her visiting relatives on Christmas Day. She asked everyone to hand over their cellphones for the entire celebration upon entering or "don't come." She said she would return them as we left.

Certain family members had major meltdowns because of her request. My mother, as always, provided hors d'oeuvres, dinner and gifts for all 23 people. Do you think this was a fair request?

NOT A BIG DEAL

DEAR NOT: Your mother wanted to encourage more than superficial communication. As she indicated, if anyone felt her request was too much of an imposition, they were free to refuse her invitation. The oldest rule of entertaining is: The host makes the rules. Of course it was a fair request!

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

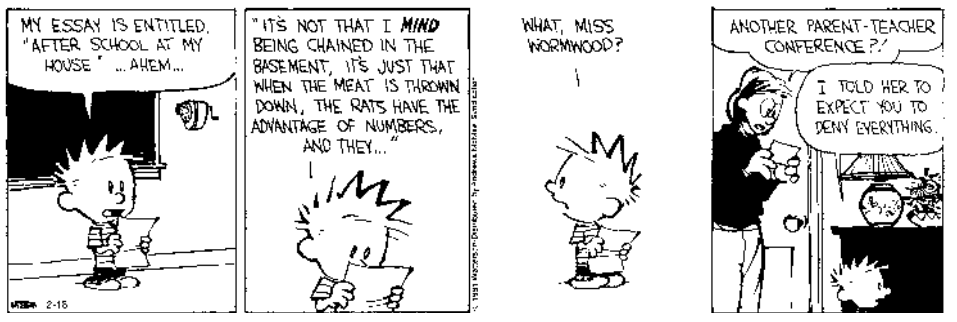
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


MY ESSAY IS ENTITLED, "AFTER SCHOOL AT MY HOUSE." ...AHEM...
"IT'S NOT THAT I MIND BEING CHAINED IN THE BASEMENT, IT'S JUST THAT WHEN THE MEAT IS THROWN DOWN, THE RATS HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF NUMBERS, AND THEY..."
WHAT, MISS WORMWOOD?
ANOTHER PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE?/
I TOLD HER TO EXPECT YOU TO DENY EVERYTHING.

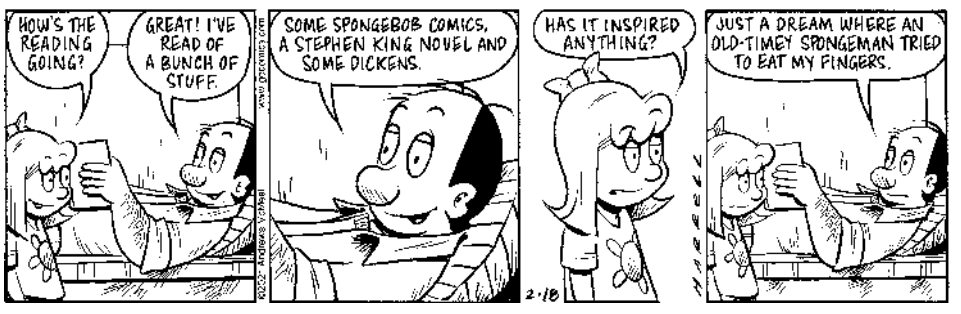
Garfield®

By Jim Davis

I REMEMBER THAT TRIP TO THE BEACH
A JELLYFISH SWAM UP MY TRUNKS
SO EMBARRASSING
BUT "JON'S JELLYFISH DANCE" GOT OVER A MILLION VIEWS

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


HOW'S THE READING GOING?
GREAT! I'VE READ OF A BUNCH OF STUFF.
SOME SPONGEBOB COMICS, A STEPHEN KING NOVEL AND SOME DICKENS.
HAS IT INSPIRED ANYTHING?
JUST A DREAM WHERE AN OLD-TIMEY SPONGEMAN TRIED TO EAT MY FINGERS.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

BLIP-BLEEP
DANG! ANOTHER SPAM TEXT MESSAGE.
YOU NEVER SHOULD HAVE GIVEN YOUR PHONE NUMBER TO THE GUY WHO SOLD YOU THAT FAKE ROLEX.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

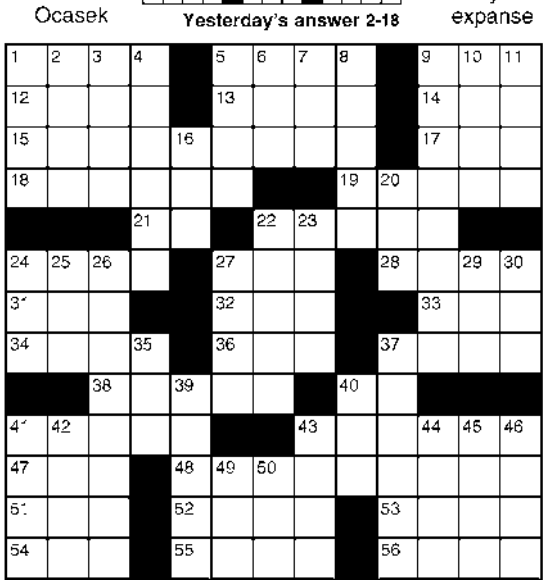
ACROSS
1 Ladder part
5 United — Emirates
9 Tummy muscles
12 Slanted type (Abbr.)
13 Jules Verne captain
14 Swiss canton
15 Red wine variety
17 Scooted
18 Where Nome is
19 Levels
21 Therefore
22 Russian ballet company
24 Challenge
27 Rotating part
28 Ancient mariner
31 Brit. record label
32 Actress Hagen
33 Altar promise
34 Future tulip
36 Rock's Ocasek
37 Rice-shaped pasta
38 Photo finish
40 Chicago transport
41 Uganda neighbor
43 Relinquished
47 Equi-
48 Artificial lake
51 Chou En- —
52 Casual tops
53 Sicilian spouter
54 Wilder's "— Town"
55 Venetian blind part
56 Appear

DOWN
1 TV host Kelly
2 Gas co., for one
3 "Peter Pan" dog
4 Slick
5 "— Karenina"
6 Classic car
7 "— dreaming?"
8 Drilling tool
9 Farewell
10 Muffin choice
11 Deadly septet
16 Ring decision
20 Otto — Bismarck
22 Actress Holmes
23 Apple since 1998
24 Society newcomer
25 Outback bird
26 Movie genre
27 Brusque
29 Wood-shaping tool
30 "Yoo- —!"
35 Inlet
37 Martini garnishes
39 Small fruit pies
40 Pierced body part
41 Metric weight
42 Jacob's twin
43 Compass point
44 Cast a ballot
45 Aachen article
46 Apothecary measure
49 Slithery fish
50 Salty expanse

Solution time: 24 mins.

M	E	O	W	■	S	A	G	■	M	O	M	S
A	B	B	A	■	P	I	E	■	O	V	A	L
C	O	O	K	W	A	R	E	■	S	E	L	A
S	N	E	E	R	S	■	S	M	A	R	T	Y
■	■	■	S	I	S	■	E	R	I	C	■	■
A	I	L	■	T	K	T	■	I	C	O	N	S
N	O	I	R	■	Y	U	K	■	S	O	R	E
T	U	N	E	S	■	C	A	R	■	K	A	Y
■	■	E	F	T	S	■	R	I	A	■	■	■
R	E	C	U	S	E	■	A	N	T	I	C	S
A	L	O	G	■	C	O	O	K	B	O	O	K
H	L	O	E	■	I	S	K	■	A	I	I	Y
T	A	K	E	■	S	U	E	■	T	A	S	E

Yesterday's answer 2-18



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Shane Lyons, 33; Molly Ringwald, 53; John Travolta, 67; Yoko Ono, 88.

Happy Birthday: Take the high road. Don't dwell on the past. Focus on the present, and move forward with a positive attitude. Put your energy where it counts, and you will reap the rewards. Holding on to something you cannot change will hold you back and make you bitter. Live life for what it has to offer, and you will find peace of mind. Your numbers are 5, 11, 18, 24, 27, 35, 44.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Don't get involved in other people's business, even if someone begs you to comment. Use your intelligence and foresight, be emotionally supportive and move along. Spend your time and attention improving what's going on in your life, not wasting time on someone's criticism and complaints. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Take the path of least resistance. An argument will not help you get ahead. What you do and accomplish will be what impresses those in a position to help you get on. Be creative, entertaining and, most of all, efficient. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Stick to the truth, look for the good in every situation and abide by the rules and regulations; you will get ahead. Make sure your facts and figures are updated before you put your plans in motion. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* You'll receive an unexpected offer. Question what you'll have to give in return before you agree to move forward. Look for an option that will allow you to carry on without adding a burden that will take away from your success. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Self-criticism will lead to positive change. Don't let added responsibilities get you down or stop you from enjoying spending time with someone you love. Excessive behavior will lead to disagreements. Don't buy what you can't afford. ✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Take a virtual course that will help you land a new job or take something you enjoy doing to the next level. You can resolve an emotional matter if you use intuition and understanding when dealing with someone you love. Romance is encouraged. ✪✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Uncertainty will prevail when dealing with domestic responsibilities. Go over your expenses and cut costs wherever possible. Don't let stress, taking risks or poor choices result in ill health. Do your best to resolve issues, not add to them. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Look over your options; take the path that you find most stimulating. Working in a creative capacity is favored. Refuse to let the uncertainty someone displays cause you to make a decision that isn't in your favor. Let go of the past. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Mix the old with the new, and prepare to start over. Don't let anyone take over or pressure you to do things you don't want to do. Focus on yourself, the ones you love and the things you enjoy doing most. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Stick close to home, protect what you have worked so hard to build, and nurture the relationships that mean the most to you. Embrace positive change, and walk away from situations that limit you mentally, emotionally or physically. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Take a moment to gather information before making an assumption. Getting your facts correct first will spare you from making a mistake. It's essential to live by the rules and to set a good example. Choose peace over discord. ✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Leave nothing to chance. Tidy up loose ends. Take care of money matters, contracts and health issues that might stand between you and what you want to do. Don't count on someone to take care of your responsibilities. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are demonstrative, passionate and proactive. You are loving and impetuous. ✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	5				2			
	3		9		2		8	
9				1				4
	7						2	
		4				8		
	2						9	
4				7				3
	9		6		4		7	
		3				1		

Difficulty Level ★★★ 2/18

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

4	1	8	9	2	6	3	5	7
5	6	9	8	3	7	2	1	4
3	2	7	5	1	4	6	8	9
1	9	6	3	5	8	7	4	2
7	5	2	6	4	1	8	9	3
8	3	4	7	9	2	5	6	1
6	7	1	4	8	3	9	2	5
9	4	3	2	6	5	1	7	8
2	8	5	1	7	9	4	3	6

Difficulty Level ★★★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

SMART CHOICES **Solution: 9 letters**

S	T	R	O	P	S	M	A	E	R	(D)	(E)	(A)	(L)	C
S	S	L	F	I	T	N	E	S	S	O	B	R	O	H
E	S	S	E	L	I	F	E	S	T	Y	L	E	O	A
N	M	E	P	V	B	R	O	C	E	D	B	E	H	N
I	O	R	C	I	A	E	V	O	L	U	U	R	C	G
S	N	I	O	N	H	R	M	E	D	T	D	A	S	E
U	O	F	S	T	A	S	T	O	L	S	G	C	R	T
B	E	P	O	I	S	N	N	C	V	L	E	U	R	A
E	F	E	T	R	C	N	I	O	U	I	T	E	S	T
Y	S	A	L	I	M	E	I	F	I	N	N	S	S	S
L	E	R	S	E	O	K	D	A	E	T	E	G	T	E
I	L	N	U	H	C	N	T	V	R	T	A	M	A	L
M	I	I	O	O	I	T	S	A	S	B	O	L	K	A
A	G	N	T	M	C	O	P	F	U	T	U	R	E	E
F	A	S	L	A	O	G	N	I	D	N	E	P	S	R

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Agile, Assets, Boss, Brainstorm, Budget, Business, Career, Change, Course, Deal, Decision, Decor, Dreams, Elect, Family, Fashion, Finances, Fitness, Foods, Future, Goals, Habits, Inform, Lifestyle, Love, Menu, Mindful, Money, Moving, Options, Partner, Real Estate, Relationships, School, Spending, Sports, Stakes, Stock, Study, Travel, Venture

Yesterday's Answer: Heartbeat

The NEW **Treasury 41** can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Lakers begin stretch without Davis, beat Wolves

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—LeBron James had 30 points, 13 rebounds and seven assists and Dennis Schröder scored 24 points, helping the Los Angeles Lakers pull away from the Minnesota Timberwolves for a 112-104 victory on Tuesday night.

Montrezl Harrell pitched in 17 points for the Lakers, who stopped a seven-game losing streak at Minnesota with their first win at Target Center since March 25, 2015.

Minnesota rookie Anthony Edwards had a career-high 28 points plus seven rebounds and five assists. Karl-Anthony Towns scored a quiet 15 points for the Timberwolves, who were outscored 17-5 to start the fourth quarter after a spirited effort over the first three periods.

Edwards, the first overall pick in the draft, hit his fourth and fifth 3-pointers of the game to cut the lead to 105-100 with 3:28 to go. Edwards was called for a charging foul on James, knocking the four-time league MVP over and negating a runner in the lane with 2:57 left, and the Timberwolves never got any closer.

The Lakers played the first of what will be several games in a row without seven-time All-Star Anthony Davis, who was shelved with an injury to his Achilles tendon. He aggravated it in a loss at Denver on Sunday that ended the Lakers' seven-game winning streak.

AP
Minnesota Timberwolves' Karl-Anthony Towns, left, and Los Angeles Lakers' Alex Caruso battle for the ball in the first half of an NBA game, Tuesday, Feb. 16, 2021, in Minneapolis.

Nets 128, Suns 124

In Phoenix, James Harden scored 38 points, Joe Harris added 22 and Brooklyn overcame a 24-point deficit to stun the Suns.

The Nets were playing without two of their three main stars, but Harden was more than up for the challenge against the Suns. Kevin Durant was out with a hamstring injury while Kyrie Irving was held out with lower back tightness.

Harden's 3-pointer from a few feet beyond the arc with 31 seconds left gave the Nets their first lead of the game at 126-124 and he hit two more free throws with 11.3 seconds remaining to polish off the win. The Suns didn't score over the final 2:48.

Brooklyn won its fourth straight game in a triumphant return to Phoenix for coach Steve Nash. The Suns had their six-game winning streak snapped.

Chris Paul scored 29 points, including 17 in the fourth quarter, but it wasn't enough for the Suns. Devin Booker added 22.

Pelicans 144, Grizzlies 113

In Memphis, Zion Williamson scored 31 points while dominating inside, and New Orleans ended a three-game skid with a victory over the Grizzlies.

Williamson, who was 13 of 16 from the field, added seven rebounds and six assists as the Pelicans finished with a season high in points. Josh Hart scored a season-high 27 points and Brandon Ingram had 22 for New Orleans.

Ja Morant scored 28 points on 12-of-16 shooting for Memphis. Kyle Anderson finished with 19 points and Dillon Brooks scored 18, going 4 of 6 from 3-point range.

The Pelicans won their fifth straight over the Grizzlies in the latest showdown between Williamson, the top overall pick in the 2019 draft, and Morant, who was taken second.

Raptors 123, Bucks 113

In Milwaukee, Fred VanVleet scored 33 points, Pascal Siakam added 23 and Toronto withstood the loss of Kyle Lowry to beat the slumping Bucks.

Lowry exited with a sore left ankle in the third quarter but had 18 points, six rebounds and six assists in 22 minutes. The ankle problem caused Lowry to go to the locker room late in the first half, though he returned to start the third quarter.

Milwaukee lost its fourth straight despite getting 34 points, 10 rebounds and eight assists from Giannis Antetokounmpo. The Bucks hadn't dropped four in a row since the 2019 Eastern Conference finals against Toronto, when they blew a 2-0 lead and lost the series in six games.

Celtics 112, Nuggets 99

In Boston, Jaylen Brown had 27 points and eight assists to help the Celtics withstand a 43-point night from Nikola Jokic and beat Denver.

Jayson Tatum added 21 points and eight assists to help Boston bounce back following two anemic performances in back-to-back losses to Detroit and Washington—the Eastern Conference's bottom two teams.

It was Jokic's third 40-point game of the season. Jamal Murray added 25 points but Denver had its three-game winning streak snapped.

The Nuggets were extremely short-handed playing without five rotation players, including Paul Millsap (left knee sprain) and Monte Morris (right shoulder strain).

Trail Blazers 115, Thunder 104

In Oklahoma City, Damian Lillard scored 12 of his 31 points in the final 4:11 to help Portland beat the Thunder.

The Trail Blazers squandered a 24-point lead in the second half, then regained control behind Lillard, who made all four of his 3-point tries during the closing run while playing with five fouls.

Gary Trent Jr. scored 19 points and Enes Kanter had eight points and 21 rebounds for Portland, which has won five straight. Lillard is averaging 30.2 points during the streak.

Lu Dort scored 23 points and Hamidou Diallo added 17 for the Thunder.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic	W	L	PCT	GB
Philadelphia	18	10	.643	0.0
Brooklyn	18	12	.600	1.0
Boston	14	13	.519	3.5
New York	14	15	.483	4.5
Toronto	13	15	.464	5.0
Central				
Milwaukee	16	12	.571	0.0
Indiana	14	14	.500	2.0
Chicago	11	15	.423	4.0
Cleveland	10	19	.345	6.5
Detroit	8	19	.296	7.5
Southeast				
Charlotte	13	15	.464	0.0
Miami	11	16	.407	1.5
Atlanta	11	16	.407	1.5
Orlando	10	18	.357	3.0
Washington	8	17	.320	3.5

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Pacific	W	L	PCT	GB
LA Lakers	22	7	.759	0.0
LA Clippers	21	8	.724	1.0
Phoenix	17	10	.630	4.0
Golden State	15	13	.536	6.5
Sacramento	12	15	.444	9.0
Southwest				
San Antonio	16	11	.593	0.0
Memphis	11	12	.478	3.0
Dallas	13	15	.464	3.5
New Orleans	12	15	.444	4.0
Houston	11	16	.407	5.0
Northwest				
Utah	23	5	.821	0.0
Portland	17	10	.630	5.5
Denver	15	12	.556	7.5
Oklahoma City	11	16	.407	11.5
Minnesota	7	21	.250	16.0

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Japan starts COVID-19 vaccination drive amid Olympic worries

TOKYO (AP)—Months after other major economies, Japan began giving the first coronavirus vaccines to front-line health workers Wednesday. Many are wondering if the campaign will reach enough people, and in time, to save a Summer Olympics already delayed a year by the worst pandemic in a century.

Despite recent rising infections, Japan has largely dodged the kind of cataclysm that has battered other wealthy countries' economies, social networks and healthcare systems. But the fate of the Olympics, and the billions of dollars at stake should the Games fail, makes Japan's vaccine campaign crucial. Japanese officials are also well aware that China, which has had success eradicating the virus, will host next year's Winter Olympics, something that heightens the desire to make the Tokyo Games happen.

A big problem as the vaccines roll out—first to medical workers, then the elderly and then, possibly in late spring or early summer, to the rest of the population—are worries about shortages of the imported vaccines Japan relies on, and a long-time reluctance among many Japanese to take vaccines because of fears of relatively-rare side effects that have been played up by the media in the past.

The late rollout will make it impossible to reach so-called "herd immunity" against the virus before the Olympics begin in July, experts say.

The vaccination drive has the support of the government, but there's widespread wariness, even opposition, among citizens to having the Games at all. About 80% of those polled in recent media surveys support cancellation or further postponement of the Olympics because of the virus worries.

Cancellation of local Olympic torch relay sought

A governor in a western Japanese prefecture is talking about canceling torch relay events in his area ahead of the Tokyo Olympics.

Gov. Tatsuya Maruyama of Shimane prefecture on Wednesday said he was unhappy with COVID-19 prevention measures surrounding the relay. His prefecture has been largely untouched by the pandemic but he fears that could change.

"Tokyo has been the source of the nationwide infections," Maruyama said in a briefing Wednesday. "This also affects Shimane."

He added it "may threaten out daily life."

Maruyama said he also opposed the Olympics going forward, and he was dissatisfied with central government measures—and measures by the Tokyo metro government—to prevent the spread of the virus.

The relay is to pass through the small prefecture in May.

The torch relay is to begin March 25 in northeastern Japan and will crisscross the country with about 10,000 runners. The relay ends in Tokyo with the opening ceremony of the Olympics on July 23.

Concerns about the relay are reflected in general skepticism in Japan about holding the Olympics. Several polls have shown about 80% of Japanese think the games should be canceled or postponed.

Local organizers and the International Olympic Committee began rolling out the first edition of so-called Playbooks for the Games earlier this month.

Serena vs Osaka in Aussie Open semis

AP
United States' Serena Williams hits a forehand return to Romania's Simona Halep during their quarterfinal match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Tuesday, Feb. 16, 2021.

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Serena Williams was not pleased with the way her play suddenly was slipping in the Australian Open quarterfinals.

After one mistake against No. 2 seed Simona Halep—who won the last time they played each other—Williams pointed at her racket strings and made a sour face, as if to indicate it wasn't her fault. After another, Williams looked up at her guest box with palms up and asked, "What is happening?"

That dismay didn't last long. Williams recalibrated her shots with the help of terrific footwork, overcame 33 unforced errors and claimed the last five games, beating Halep 6-3, 6-3 Tuesday to return to the final four at Melbourne Park for the first time since she won the tournament in 2017. That was her most recent Grand Slam title.

"I just realized I was making a lot of unforced errors in those games that I lost. And I knew that I had an opportunity to play better," said Williams, now two wins away from claiming her record-tying 24th major singles championship. "So I was just like, 'Just stay in there. You just can keep going.' And that's what I just did."

She set up a showdown against No. 3 Naomi Osaka, a three-time Slam champ who will carry a 19-match winning streak into Thursday's semifinals.

"She's Serena," Osaka said. "I feel really intimidated when I see her on the other side of the court."

Naomi Osaka has won 19 consecutive matches but none of those wins came against Serena Williams. Three-time major champion Osaka will meet 23-time Grand Slam singles title winner Williams in the Australian Open semifinals. This will be their fourth matchup. The most memorable was Osaka's victory in the 2018 U.S. Open final, which ended with both players in tears during the trophy ceremony. That was one of Williams' four losses in Grand Slam finals since her last major championship, which came in Australia in 2017.

This will be their fourth matchup; the most memorable, of course, was Osaka's victory in the 2018 U.S. Open final.

On that night, Williams got into an argument with the chair umpire after her coach, Patrick Mouratoglou, was caught trying to relay a signal—that's not allowed in Grand Slam play— nd wound up being docked a game. Osaka's win closed with thousands of fans filling Arthur Ashe Stadium with boos, and both of the athletes in tears during the trophy ceremony.

"We both have had closure," Williams said, "and we have reached out to each other."

Top-ranked Barty ousted

Top-ranked Ash Barty built a big lead in her quarterfinal match before her opponent took a medical timeout and left the court.

More than an hour later, it was Barty heading abruptly through the exit. She was upset Wednesday by Karolina Muchova, 1-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Seeded No. 25, Muchova earned her first semifinal berth in a Grand Slam. Her comeback win ended Barty's bid to become the first Australian woman to win the title in Melbourne since Chris O'Neil in 1978.

"It's heartbreaking, of course," Barty said. "But the sun will come up tomorrow. You're either winning or you're learning, and today is a massive learning curve for me."

Muchova's opponent Thursday will be Jennifer Brady, who beat fellow American and good friend Jessica Pegula 4-6, 6-2, 6-1. Brady reached her second consecutive Grand Slam semifinal.

"I hope I make it a habit," she said. "Hopefully I have a new habit of making finals."

Seeded 22nd, Brady struggled at times and gave her racket an angry toss midway through the second set. The unseeded Pegula, who advanced beyond the third round at a major for the first time, appeared to tire down the stretch.

"We're such good friends," Brady said. "I'm really happy for her success. I know we'll be having a lot more tough battles."

Daniil Medvedev beat Andrey Rublev, his friend and teammate on Russia's ATP Cup-winning squad, 7-5, 6-3, 6-2.and will take a 19-match winning streak into the Australian Open semifinals.

"It's never easy," he said. "But I mean, we're all so competitive. During the match, you can see nothing matters. Just need to win ... reach the semis of a Grand Slam."

The No. 4-seeded Medvedev hasn't dropped a set to No. 7-seeded Rublev in four tour-level matches. That includes their meeting in the U.S. Open quarterfinals last year.

He called for the trainer after the match to massage his upper legs as he sat in a courtside chair before a TV interview.

"First time. I think I never saw it, also," he said in the on-court interview. "I went to the bench, last game of the match. I started cramping. I knew he was cramping also. At the end, I locked completely ... three last points when I was getting ready for the serve."

'Not normal': Djokovic raises quarantine-injury connection

MELBOURNE (AP)—Novak Djokovic won an Australian Open match between two guys with abdominal muscle issues, setting up a semifinal against someone who beat an opponent with debilitating back spasms.

On the other half of the draw, Rafael Nadal's own bad back is improving, at least, as he heads into his quarterfinal against a man whose fourth-round foe pulled out of the Grand Slam tournament because of his own abdominal injury.

So health was top of mind Tuesday night for the No. 1-ranked Djokovic, who sees what is happening all around Melbourne Park and draws a direct connection to the 14-day quarantines imposed because of the coronavirus pandemic when players arrived in Australia in January.

According to Djokovic, who announced last year he was establishing a new association to represent male tennis players, most don't want to proceed with the season if it means going through that sort of isolation repeatedly—either with limited time to practice and go to the gym daily or, in the case of those who potentially were exposed to COVID-19 while traveling, barred entirely from leaving their hotel rooms during the two weeks.

"It's too many injuries, honestly," Djokovic said, then sighed heavily, during an on-court interview after his four-set quarterfinal victory against Alexander Zverev.

"I'm just hoping this is all temporary, so we can kind of go back to what we are kind of used to, without interruptions of practice," Djokovic continued. "The 14-day quarantine—people don't realize, but the amount of injuries in this tournament has shown how much effect it has on the players' bodies. It's really—it's taken its toll, unfortunately, on all of us."

Zverev's midsection, like Djokovic's, was taped up for their match. Djokovic's next foe, 114th-ranked qualifier Aslan Karatsev, won Tuesday against 18th-seeded Grigor Dimitrov, who could barely make it up a set of stairs to leave the court afterward and said his back was so painful beforehand it was difficult to put on his socks.

Nadal dealt with a back problem for weeks, sitting out one of the tuneup tournaments held at the Australian Open's site.

No. 9 Matteo Berrettini withdrew after hurting a stomach muscle in the third round. Quarterfinalist Andrey Rublev's fourth-round match ended after two sets when No. 24 Casper Ruud stopped because of an injury. Dimitrov's opponent in the third round, No. 15 Pablo Carreño Busta, stopped after just seven games.

And so on.

"What we are seeing is not normal. It's not something we are used to. Top players are the ones that are fittest. ... I mean, obviously, it has something to do with these kind of circumstances that we were in," Djokovic said at his post-match news conference, referring to the quarantines meant to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

"I don't want to sit here (and) complain about what we have been through. But we have to be honest and realistic that it has an effect on the physical well-being of players," he said. "Of course, also mental, emotional."

He said he has "heard a lot of complaints" from players who were willing to go through quarantines for the bigger paychecks at a Grand Slam tournament but are concerned about reduced prize money at lower-level events.

Djokovic also mentioned the possibility of a "bubble" environment of the sort the NBA used last season, with all contests being played at one site—an idea Zverev endorsed.

"We can't have a traveling circuit right now," said Zverev, who is ranked No. 7 and was the U.S. Open runner-up in September.

"I think what the ATP should do and should look into is maybe having a venue like here and play multiple weeks at one place. Multiple tournaments, multiple weeks," the 23-year-old German said. "Because, at the end of the day, in Europe right now, we can't have spectators, anyways, so what difference does it really make where we play the tournament? We can change the background, we can change the city name on the court or whatever, and then play it at one venue."

In response to a request for comment, ATP Chairman Andrea Gaudenzi issued an emailed statement via a spokesman that read in part: "The two-week quarantine was a first, and we are monitoring the impact on player health very closely."

Cubs to discuss futures with Bryant, 2 other sluggers

CHICAGO (AP) — Jed Hoyer plans to chat with Kris Bryant about his future during spring training. Also on deck for the top baseball executive for the Chicago Cubs: similar discussions with Javier Báez and Anthony Rizzo.

All three sluggers have contracts set to expire after this season, when they can become free agents. How much longer they remain in Chicago are big questions as the Cubs open spring training on Wednesday in Arizona.

"I'd love to have that continuity with these guys going forward," Hoyer said Tuesday. "Financially, it's impossible for any team to be able to continue with that group."

Chicago's luxury tax payroll would have been $216 million last year had the full season been played, well above the tax threshold for the second straight year.

Bryant, Báez and Rizzo helped Chicago win the World Series in 2016, stopping a championship drought dating to 1908. The Cubs finished first in the NL Central last season and made the playoffs for the fifth time in six years. But they managed just one run over two games in a wild-card sweep by Miami.

Chicago hasn't advanced in the postseason since reaching the NL Championship Series in 2017. A makeover is under way. And it's not clear how much longer three of its biggest stars will remain with the team.

Bryant's name, in particular, has come up in trade rumors. Hoyer said the Cubs have not engaged in talks with other clubs of late.

"We were involved in a lot of rumors this year," Hoyer said. "Some were just completely inaccurate. And then I would say some were just sort of exaggerated — the seriousness of those discussions."

But he also acknowledged more changes are coming, that the odds of retaining Bryant, Rizzo and Báez are slim. Bryant has a $19.5 million salary, Rizzo $16.5 million and Báez $11.65 million.

"We've said all along, very clearly, we'd like to keep some of these players," Hoyer said. "That would be great. But it's unrealistic to keep all of the players that were a significant part of 2016. That's just a reality."

AP

In this September 26, 2020 file photo, Chicago Cubs infielder Kris Bryant (17) waits for the pitch from Chicago White Sox's Dane Dunning (51) during their game at Guaranteed Rate Field, Chicago, IL.

Chicago made some major moves in the offseason.

Theo Epstein stepped down, and Hoyer was promoted to president of baseball operations.

The Cubs traded ace Yu Darvish along with $3 million to San Diego, saving $56 million from 2021-23, and said goodbye to Jon Lester, who signed a $5 million, one-year deal with Washington in free agency. They declined to offer a contract to slugger Kyle Schwarber, who signed a $10 million deal with the Nationals, and gave Joc Pederson a $7 million agreement to replace him.

The Cubs are reuniting with one familiar face after Jake Arrieta agreed last week to a $6 million deal that is pending a physical. The 2015 NL Cy Young Award winner would essentially take Lester's spot after Hoyer was given some added financial flexibility in recent weeks.

"It was really more of a timing issue than anything," Hoyer said. "Jon Lester's been sort of a constant in my career. I love having him. He's an A-plus teammate and obviously an A-plus competitor."

Hoyer indicated the Cubs were close to adding a reliever, saying they "probably" will announce a deal soon. He also said Rowan Wick will be slowed at the start of camp because of a muscle injury in the ribs area, and Kyle Ryan will be delayed because of COVID-19 protocols.

When it comes to the closer, the Cubs appear to be set. That job belongs to Craig Kimbrel for now.

Manager David Ross said he expects him to start the season in his familiar role after pitching better down the stretch last year. The seven-time All-Star struggled early in 2020 and lost his job. But in eight appearances in September, Kimbrel did not allow a run and struck out 13 without a walk in 7 1/3 innings. Jeremy Jeffress, who had a 1.54 ERA and eight saves in 10 chances, is a free agent.

KAGMAN

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us are Noah Mesa, Elbert and Joedy Pinaula, Christian Achas, Koen Kabiriel, Jericho Jones, Jacoby Cabrera, Andrew Camacho, David Igisai, Sebastian Muna, Max Cruz, Richard Cepeda, and Oliver Weilbacher.

The Ayuyus also ruled the co-ed 500m prelims and finals races in the opening leg of the series. Kagman timed in at 3:01.57 and 3:04.49 in the 500m prelims and finals, respectively, to prevail against Saipan Southern (3:03.71/3:06.06) and MHS (4:11.71/3:18.04).

The defending champion was the first place finisher, too, in the co-ed 1,000m prelims after completing the four-lap race in 6:33.82. The Manta Rays were a distant second with its 6:58.07, while the Dolphins logged 6:58.64 for the third sport.

Marianas High School paddlers gesture after completing the 500m race. ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Then in the finals, Saipan Southern foiled Kagman's bid for a sweep, as the Manta Rays clocked in at 6:34.70 against the Ayuyus' 6:48.91. MHS placed third anew with its 7:14.96.

Saipan Southern got its second victory in the series kick-off when it ruled the women's 1,000m finals. The Lady Rays timed in at 7:18.74 against the 7:34.12 of defending champions Lady Dolphins and the Lady Ayuyus' 7:35.15. Kagman topped the preliminary race after checking in at 7:02.67, while Saipan Southern was ranked second (7:28.40) and MHS got disqualified.

For the other women's race—the 500m event—Kagman went 2-for-2. The Lady Ayuyus smoked their competitors in the preliminary race after recording 3:07.97 against the 3:13.92 and 3:26.14 of the Lady Dolphins and Lady Rays, respectively. In the finals, Kagman also got a sizeable lead after timing in at 3:18.63, while MHS logged 3:24.33 and Saipan Southern posted 3:29.31.

Last weekend's races were warm-ups with no points awarded to the participating schools. The point races will begin this Saturday and will have the same sprint events, while the long distance competition is set. for Feb. 27. Another set of sprint races is scheduled for March 6, while the championship round is slated on March 13 with double points at stake. The team with the most points at the completion of the series wins.

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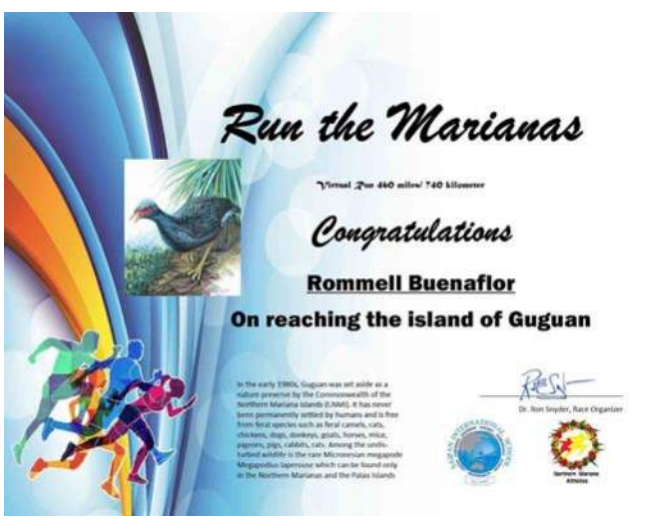
RTM brought together a lot of people who would not have met otherwise and this has spun off into other virtual challenges," the SIS headmaster said.

"The Ekiden relay was filled with RTM runners and I hope that everyone who made this 460-mile journey is proud of themselves. Beyond the local community, many teams were built with friends and family across the world," he added.

Since Run The Marianas was a virtual race, it was open to off-island runners and drew participation from people from Europe, North America, South America, Australia, New Zealand, and Asia with over 400 signing up for the event.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Rommel Buenaflor's finisher certificate shows a brief history of Guguan, one of the island stops in the Run The Marianas.

"The Proclaimers was my team and we had my youngest daughter in Scotland, my oldest daughter and her husband in North Carolina, and my wife and I here on Saipan. This brought us together to share stories and log miles, culminating in my oldest daughter saying, 'when is the next one?'" Snyder said.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan International School students run around their campus ground in As Lito to log miles for the Run The Marianas.

The Proclaimers finished the race early this month, while 10th Graders SIS was the first to complete the course, accomplishing the feat in November or about less than a month after the event kicked off. In the solo event, Rommel Buenaflor led the finishers list, as he reached Rota on Dec. 29, 2020.

Other notable teams in the Run The Marianas were SIS Grade 5/6, which completed the course twice and the Mile High Club and the English Academy, which "ran" the race three times.

"Even though the race is officially over, some runners are still working on it and will receive their medals when they notify the race director they have made it to Rota. RTM was not a small challenge and everyone in it should be proud of their accomplishments," Snyder said.

Lakers begin stretch without Davis, beat Wolves

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Kagman rules men's opener

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Kagman High School paddlers keep a steady pace on their way to the finish line of the 500m preliminary race in the opening leg of the 2020-2021 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Race Series last Saturday at Kilili Beach.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Kagman High School dominated the opening leg of the men's events in the 2020-2021 Public School System Interscholastic High School Canoe Race Series held last Saturday at Kilili Beach.

The Ayuyus paddlers topped both the preliminary and finals of the 1,000m race as well as the 500m event. KHS timed in at 5:43.90 in the 1,000m prelims to finish way ahead of Marianas High School (5:53.67) and Saipan Southern High School (6:13.92). In the 1,000m finals, the Ayuyus also managed to win convincingly over their foes after clocking in at 5:50.45. MHS checked in at 5:59.63, while Saipan Southern recorded 6:25.23.

In the 500m prelims and finals, the Ayuyus registered 2:39.39 and 2:44.02, beating the Manta Rays (2:43.75/2:48.94) and Dolphins (2:55.37/2:50.21) anew.

Kagman, which is the defending champion in the men's and co-ed divisions, is coached by Peter Aldan, Jason Tarkong, and Momoko Halstead and listed 13 paddlers on its rosters. Competing for the Ayuy-

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Saipan Southern High School paddlers compete in the 1,000m finals race.

Over 21K miles in Run The Marianas

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Participants in the Run The Marianas logged more than 21,000 miles at the completion of the virtual race.

Race director Ron Snyder said 28 teams and seven individuals completed the 460-mile run that brought runners to 13 island stops since "starting" the race at Farallon De Pajaros in October.

"Participants completed 21,049 miles or 85% of the way around the Earth," said Snyder, who drafted the course that had runners making it to Maug Landing (42-mile mark), followed by Asuncion (67), Agrihan (130), Pagan (175), Alamagan (214), Guguan (234), Sarigan (276), Anatahan (300), Farallon De Medinilla (325), Saipan (376), Saipan International School (388), Tinian (397), Aguijan (410), and Rota (460). In each stop, runners received certificates with the description of the island they reached.

But more than the thousands of miles earned and brief lesson on history of the islands, Snyder is pleased with how the community came together, took on the challenge, and finished the race amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

"If I had to sum up Run The Marianas in one word, I would have to say, 'community.'

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Some of the finishers in the Run The Marianas pose for a photo after a victory lap at the Oleai Sports Complex track oval last Monday.